







STUDIES OF ASSASSINATION.

BY

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LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS."

"Evil on itself shall back recoil."—*Milton.*

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P R E F A C E.

THE aim of this work is to emphasize the folly of assassination, by illustrating its common reaction on its perpetrators and its consistent failure to accomplish its purpose.

Attention is specially drawn to this subject at the present moment by the assassination of Czar Alexander II. of Russia, and the resultant events. It is yet too early to employ the story of this assassination as a lesson, for its consequences are in the future. But it may be predicted with confidence that these consequences will in this

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case be resilient, as they have uniformly been in all assassinations known to modern history, and that failure will once more attach to the assassins' work. Never by such means has civilization advanced; never by such means have the rights of man been promoted. Rebellion has sometimes helped the cause of human progress, but assassination never; and it is possible for rebellion to win our respect, when its cause is righteous; but assassination can only excite abhorrence, be its cause good or bad.

United States Consulate, Cardiff,

April, 1881.

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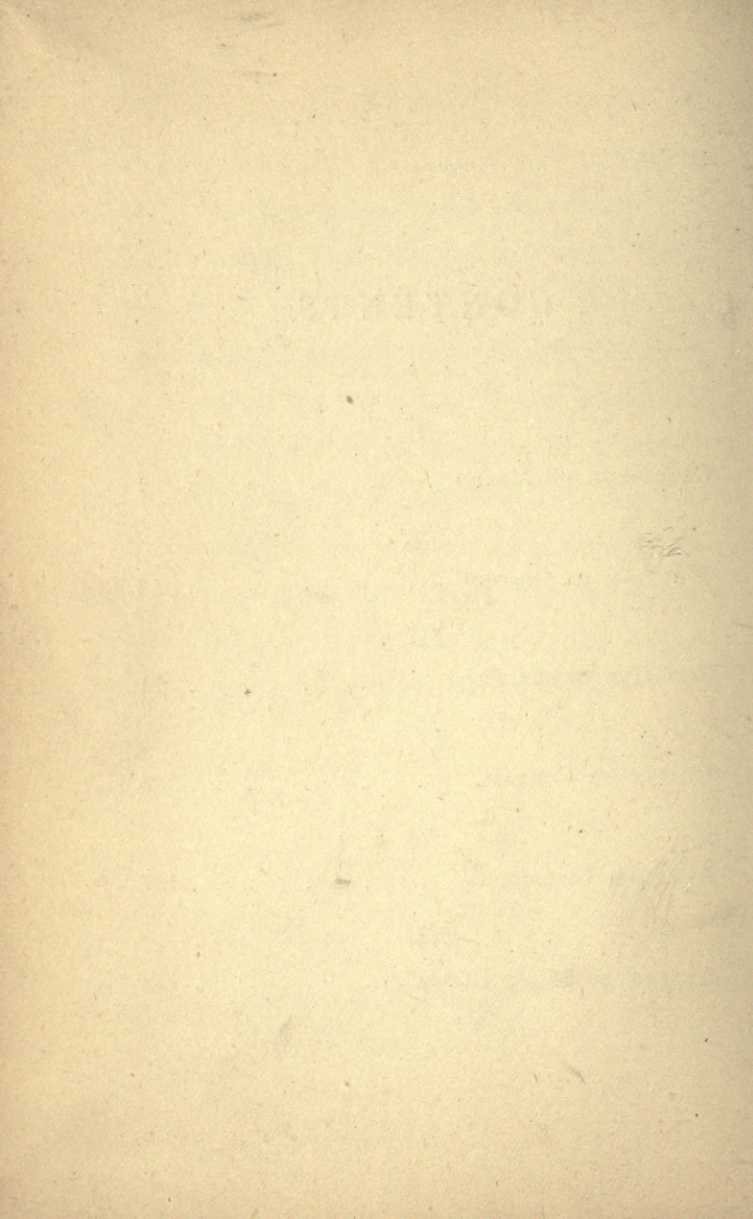
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I.

CATHARINE DE MEDICI.

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CATHARINE DE MEDICI.

I.

FLORENCE, that wondrously beautiful Italian city where the cultured tourist lingers most lovingly, and from which he parts most regretfully, has given to the world many names which will endure to the end of time. Here dwelt Dante, framer of immortal verse; Michel Angelo, whose marvellous genius lives alike in painting and in sculpture; Galileo, mightiest and first of astronomers; Americus Vesputius, Machiavelli, Boccaccio, Cosmo; and here was born that most depraved and monstrous of women, that greatest and most heartless of assassins,

Catharine de Medici. For every other assassin that the world has known, some palliating word may possibly be said; for her, none! The murderer of William of Orange was animated by a fanatic zeal in religion; but Catharine de Medici cared nothing for religion. Charlotte Corday was gentle to whom she loved, and a vestal in her purity; Catherine de Medici loved no one, and rioted in luxurious vice. Guy Fawkes and his fellows were men of honour and credit; with her honour was a bagatelle, a nothing. Even Wilkes Booth believed himself serving the purposes of his friends, and striking at tyranny; Catharine de Medici served no one but herself, cared for no one but herself, and held in her brutal breast no single throb of human sympathy. Her assassinations were many, and occurring at frequent intervals; but in the single massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, her terrible genius wrought the most gigantic crime of this description known to history. To beautiful Florence

belongs the fame, or infamy, of having been the birthplace of her whom we may truly term the most infamous and the most heartless of assassins.

The year 1519 saw the infant born, who during the seventy years of her dreadful life displayed such demoniac wickedness. Of her childhood we know nothing especially noteworthy; but it seems impossible that one so devoid of all gentle human attributes could even in her childhood have been innocent and artless.

Florence, in that day, was under the brilliant but despotic government of Lorenzo de Medici, Catharine's father. She was reared among the scenes of that dazzling and demoralizing period which followed the surrender of Italian liberty—liberty which had been bought with bloody and desperate strife, amid the clangour of arms and the pealing of shouts for freedom—the busy hum of industry drowned in the tumult of clanking steel—an enthusiastic people

gathered about the unfurled gonfalon, their hearts nerved with the determination to live or die in the defence of their down-trodden rights—the polished citizen and the wild robber of the Apennines crossing their flashing knives fraternally, to swear destruction to their oppressors ; that demoralizing period, when liberty *thus* bought had been tamely and ignominiously surrendered after two centuries, and an effeminate and enervated people submitted without a cry or a struggle to the revival of the old oppression, in the sway of Lorenzo de Medici. But never did oppressor more cunningly conceal chains beneath garlanding flowers. Lorenzo was intellectual, cultivated, and immensely wealthy. He drowned the cries of expiring liberty beneath strains of enchanting music. The minds of the people were diverted from any remembrance of their degradation by a round of the most dazzling delights. Poets sang voluptuous strains, and sculptors rendered in speaking marble the loveliness that has

outlived centuries. Entertainments of the most gorgeous description were provided for the young, and munificent academies and libraries were founded and maintained to please their elders. The rudest of the populace were welcomed to dramatic entertainments whose splendour the world has never outrivalled; while in the magnificent palace of the Medicis the wealthy and the learned feasted and made merry, with sparkling wines and delicious viands and lovely women, surrounded by the noblest paintings and the most beautiful statuary—Michel Angelo with his pencil, and Politian with his inspired verse, celebrating the glories of the scene. Amid these surroundings the little girl Catharine moved while her father lived, and afterward under the equally despotic but less hypocritical reign of Alexander de Medici. She had only reached her fourteenth year when the reigning pope, her uncle, negotiated her marriage with the French Henry, Duke of Orleans; and the Italian

girl left Florence for ever, to take up her abode in France.

II.

It was in the year 1533 that this baleful spirit took its place in French history. From this earliest moment she began the practice of that studied hypocrisy whose clear purpose was the obtaining of dominion over the people of France. Her position was a comparatively humble one in that court. Henry, her husband, was the second son of the French king, Francis I.; there was little prospect that he would ever attain to the throne. Her husband's mistress, Diana de Poitiers, and her father-in-law's mistress, the Duchess d'Etampes, were both women of more influence than was Catharine; but the wily Italian flattered and courted them both—bitter haters of each other as they were. By-and-by the elder brother died,

and when the king soon after followed him to the grave Catharine's husband became king. Still Catharine bided her time, and pretended to care nothing for affairs of state, and her husband's mistress shone in public as the virtual queen. It was not until she had reached her fortieth year that the wily Italian woman believed she saw her way clear to the power for which she thirsted. Her husband was accidentally killed at this time, and her son, Francis II., became King of France.

Francis II. was a feeble, sickly youth, with little mind, and less energy. His mother believed she could sway him easily; but, unfortunately for her calculations, he was submissively fond of his beautiful young wife, Mary Queen of Scots, whose influence over him was supreme. Mary, in her turn, was under the influence of her maternal uncles, the Cardinal Lorraine, Le Balafre, and Francis Duke of Guise—all good Catholics, but caring nothing for Catharine de

Medici and her wishes. Finding herself balked in her ambition, the queen mother renounced the Catholic faith and espoused the cause of the Protestants—the Huguenots, as they were called in France.

In this day those who are not intimately familiarized, by the study of history, with the terrible religious wars of the sixteenth century, find it difficult to enter fully into the feelings of the combatants in those dreadful internecine conflicts. The intelligent Catholic of to-day cannot comprehend the feeling which made the heretic of the sixteenth century such an object of abhorrence to those of the older faith. The Protestant of to-day is equally unable to realize that feeling which made a Huguenot father prefer that his daughter should die at his feet a Protestant, rather than that she should be exposed to the influences of a Catholic convent, which he sincerely believed to be nothing less than “a gate of hell.” Religion was in that day, through-

out Europe, merely a gage of battle. Under its name, the intensest civil wars were waged. At the moment of which I speak, the eyes of all the other European nations were upon France ; and the contest was not one of principle, in any true sense—it was for a form of religion, and for the substance of political power. It was not for religious freedom in its purity that the Huguenots fought. Had they succeeded in gaining power, there is no reason to believe that they would have extended to the Catholics any greater degree of toleration than the Catholics in their day of power extended to them—indeed, there is every reason to believe that they would not have done so. Their fanaticism was hardly less furious than that of the Catholics. When they obtained the temporary opportunities of victory in battle, the Huguenots levelled Catholic churches with the ground, destroyed images and paintings the most dear to the hearts of the Catholics, and covered all the outward

manifestations of the Romish religion with contumely.

The Huguenots had been steadily growing in numbers for many years previous to the coming to France of Catharine de Medici. During her husband's reign they had accumulated in sufficient force to be animated with hopes of obtaining political power in the nation. At the time when Catharine, in a fit of jealousy, and for her own base purposes, announced her espousal of their cause, the Huguenots were led by various members of the royal family and the French nobility, conspicuous among whom was the brave and virtuous Admiral Gaspard de Coligni—one of the few men of note in the history of that time whose names have come down to us unsullied with the vices of the period. Catharine's efforts were at once turned towards bringing about a revolution that should place her over the French people as ruler; to seize the boy-king Francis, her son, and Mary his wife, and shut them up in prison; to slaughter such

others of the royal family as stood in her way; and to form a Huguenot council of regency, of which she should be the head. The Huguenots assented to this scheme, but before it could be carried out it was crushed, and many Huguenots suffered death. Thereupon Catharine deserted her new allies, and returned again to the Catholics, with a shameless faithlessness quite characteristic of the woman.

The result of her return to her former allegiance was ere long made apparent. Her son Francis, the king, whom she could not control, suddenly died. That his mother was guilty of his death there is little doubt; he died from the effects of a subtle poison, dropped into his ear under pretence of curing the ear-ache, to which he was subject. Charles IX., her next son—also a boy in years—now became king, and Catharine de Medici became, to a certain extent, the sovereign of the realm, for over this son she had unbounded influence.

The course which this most unnatural

mother now adopted to effect her purposes and extend her sway, was worthy of the wicked spirit which prompted it. She set herself deliberately to work to ruin all her children at heart, to dull and stultify every moral principle which nature had planted in their breasts. She led them one continuous round of sensual delights, and converted her palace into the semi-semblance of a brothel, a scene of riotous debauchery. The result was such as she intended it should be. The health of her children was undermined, their frames enfeebled and sown with the seeds of dreadful disease, rendering them listless, dawdling creatures, devoid of energy and life. Their morals, also, became as thoroughly undermined as their physical constitutions; vice had no hideous mien to them—crime was not abhorrent—bloodshed was viewed almost with indifference, and religion was looked upon as a mere pretence and pander.

The picture now presented in the royal household shows us the two prominent

figures of our story thus: Charles IX., the young king, a man of not remarkable cruelty of character, possessing such good traits as might enable him to be characterized as a "good-hearted fellow at bottom," but of feeble will, saturated with the weakness born of sensual indulgence. From him, standing alone, it is impossible for the candid historian to believe the monstrous crime about to be perpetrated could ever have issued to performance. But his Mephistopheles stood at his elbow, in the shape of his mother, Catharine de Medici. She was now over fifty years of age; and all her bad passions were at their height. While leading her son through every conceivable avenue of pleasure that could enervate and demoralize him, she poured into his ear a continual stream of corrupting counsel, with a view to creating in his breast a terror of the Huguenots that should lead him to seek their destruction in a spirit of self-protection.

The Duke of Guise, a Catholic, and the

Admiral Coligni, a Huguenot, were the two leading spirits of the hour. Of both these men Catharine was jealous and fearful. She therefore pretended friendship for them both, and laid her plans for having them both destroyed. She induced the Duke of Guise to attempt the assassination of Coligni, intending to afterwards cause the duke to be hung for the murder—thus ridding herself of both at one blow. The assassination was attempted; Coligni was shot in the street, while passing the duke's residence, and badly wounded; but he was not killed. He was borne to his own house, where he speedily received a visit from the young king, who expressed his sympathy with the sufferer and abhorrence of the deed. But Coligni was doomed. The hour of the monster massacre was at hand.

III.

On the morning of the 17th of August, 1572, a brilliant assemblage was gathered at the church of Notre Dame, in Paris. In front of the church was a wide platform, covered with rich carpets, in whose velvet depths the foot sank luxuriously. High overhead loomed the massive towers of the celebrated cathedral, while festoons of gaily-coloured silks, and gilded banners and pennants, floated and waved in the balmy summer air. The house-tops were thronged with people, eager to witness the ceremony at hand; while in the streets and in the church, at olden balconies and windows, "fair women and brave men," the pride and fashion of the French capital, were gathered together. The Huguenot and the Catholic met on a common footing that day, and many hearts rejoiced in that hour which seemed so full of promise for the cause of peace and toleration. For this was the wedding-day of Henry of Navarre,

a Huguenot, with Marguerite, a Catholic, the daughter of Catharine de Medici, and the sister of King Charles.

The marriage took place in the presence of the assembled multitude, a Catholic bishop officiating, and then the royal cortège returned, amid the strains of music and surrounded by the perfume of flowers, to the palace it had left. Now commenced one long round of gaiety in the French capital, in honour of this seemingly auspicious event. Huguenots and Catholics, so recently battling fiercely in the conflicts of civil war, now met in the grand saloons of the royal family, and mingled in the dance. The evenings of day after day saw the city brilliantly illuminated, and a gorgeous pageantry of display was beheld on every hand. Until the evening of the 22nd the revel was prolonged. That evening, Coligni, as he left the scene of festivity to return to his lodgings, was fired upon and wounded, in the manner just described.

What pen can picture the consternation of the unsuspecting Protestants on learning that their beloved leader had received this treacherous blow ! From all parts of the kingdom they were here gathered in great numbers, having been invited hither by the king—the king at whose elbow Mephistopheles held ceaseless vigil, in the shape of Catharine de Medici. It is easy to believe that there were some mutterings of vengeance among the Huguenots ; but for the most part they felt simply consternation and bewilderment—doubting, hoping, fearing in the same hour.

Now was the time for Catharine de Medici's diabolical genius to display itself. She brought to bear upon the weak and vacillating king, her son, the terrible engines of her wicked will ; she made him believe that there was a design upon his life entertained by the Huguenots now in the city. He ran in his terror to see the wounded Coligni and promise him protection ; but his fiendish mother again beset

him and gave him no peace. She pictured to him his own head swinging in the avenging hands of a fierce Huguenot, and chilled his coward soul to its depths. She taunted him with cowardice in fearing to shed the blood of his foes. Frantic at last, the young king (but twenty-two years old at that time) finally cried out the fatal words: "Kill them all, then—kill them all. Let not one Huguenot remain to reproach me!"

It was enough. Catharine immediately communicated with the Duke of Guise, and preparations for the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day were speedily made. The city was already closely sentinelled; no Huguenot was allowed to leave on any pretext. The doomed people were helpless and unarmed in this hour of their fancied greatest security. The Catholics were instructed to wear white crosses on their hats or breasts, so that they might not be confounded with the Protestants in the dim light of the streets at night. Certain

houses throughout the city were directed to be illuminated, to afford some extra light on the occasion and add to the visible horror of the scene.

It was nearly midnight of the 24th of August, 1572—St. Bartholomew's day—when the Duke of Guise, on horseback, surrounded by a number of the Italian guard, with certain followers of his own, gathered in a street of the French capital, arrayed in the brilliant costumes of the period, and armed to the teeth. As soon as all was ready, the cavalcade moved away. Drawing up presently in front of the residence of Admiral Coligni, the duke sent a portion of his force into the house, under the leadership of a German named Behme. They came into the presence of the wounded admiral, who met them with calm dignity, and demanded the meaning of this intrusion. For an instant the murderers hesitated—but for an instant only; the brutal German, crying out "*This is our errand!*" plunged a long boar-

spear into the stomach of the doomed man, and the others at the same moment struck him down with their swords. The Duke of Guise, sitting coolly on his horse in the street, cried out to his men to throw the body out of the window. They obeyed, and the bloody corpse came tumbling to the ground. The duke got off his horse, and wiping the gore from the face of the murdered man with his handkerchief, said, "Yes; it is he;" and then, spurning the lifeless form with his foot, remounted, and rode away with his followers, to commence the greater work of blood before him.

Catharine de Medici and her cowardly son were waiting, at their palace of the Louvre, the *signal* which, as previously arranged, should announce to their listening ears the death of Coligni and the commencement of the terrible work of death—the tolling of the great bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois.

IV.

Out on the still night air came the booming of the bell high in its stone tower ; and at the signal there poured forth into the streets the horde of fanatic murderers who executed the will of the demon woman. The houses of the Huguenots were broken into, and their screaming inmates dragged forth into the streets and ruthlessly butchered. Others were hewn down in their night-garments as they ran out of their chambers, and their bodies were flung from the windows to the pavement below. Women and children were chopped to pieces in their beds, and the white sheets crimsoned with gore. The flaring torches in the streets lighted up a scene of pandemonium, miles on miles in extent. The pavements all over the city were slippery with blood. Corpses lay in heaps all about, with gashed necks dripping sanguinary tears—both sexes and all ages piled in indiscriminate slaughter. The voice of

weeping and of wailing—shrieks of anguish and groans of despair—of wrangling, tiger-like struggles, and shouts of “*Vive Dieu et le Roi!*”—in one horrid Babel rose up to the shuddering skies, where the stars looked down in mocking serenity. Flying frantically hither and thither, the defenceless Huguenots sought in vain for shelter. They were dragged from hiding-places with yells of exultation, and pierced with gleaming daggers.

All the vilest elements of Parisian life—the dregs of scoundrelism and crime—rose to the surface of that raging sea, and revelled in murder, robbery, and rapine. Not only were the staunch adherents of Protestantism destroyed, but others—themselves Catholics, but not active participants in the massacre. The coward who had quarrelled with another, seized this hour of bloody indulgence in which to murder his antagonist with impunity. The thirst for blood at last pervaded all classes—women murdered women, their rivals

in beauty—children murdered children—members of families fell upon each other, and sought, in the licence of the moment, to encompass private ends and execute private vengeance : the father fell before the knife of his son—the sister was cut down by her own brother. Horror never supped her dreadful fill more completely than during this raging of the demon long pent up in the bosom of Catharine de Medici—now let loose in all its indescribable fury.

The massacre lasted throughout several days. It was not confined to Paris, but extended into all the principal cities of the kingdom : Meaux, Orleans, Lyons, Troyes, Bourges, Rouen, Toulouse, Bordeaux—wherever Catharine's will could reach, and the executioners be found. In some quarters, the Huguenots were in a majority ; in some, the local authorities spurned the royal mandate, and would not imbrue their hands in innocent blood. In one case the Catholic bishop (of Lisieux) openly gave

his protection to the Huguenots throughout his diocese ; and no fact is better established in history than that great numbers of Catholics abhorred the hideous deed—and not only that, but struggled earnestly to save all they could from massacre. Certain it is that the Catholics of to-day thrill with an indignation as sincere as that which stirs in Protestant breasts, in contemplating this massacre. Catholic historians also claim that no priest of their church united in these bloody orgies. Whether this be true or not, every candid student of history must freely admit that political motives were at the base of the crime, and that religion was used but as a pretext by the infamous chief-instigator of the massacre, Catharine de Medici. She cared no more for the Catholic religion than for any other. With her, all religion was a fiction.

It is impossible to give a correct statement of the number of Huguenots who fell in this massacre throughout France. It

has been estimated at as high a figure as one hundred thousand souls. The more common estimate is in the neighbourhood of thirty thousand. The lowest estimate I have seen is that of the Catholic historian, Lingard, who places the number at fifteen hundred.

The usual result of all assassinations followed this one : failure to accomplish the result anticipated. The Huguenots multiplied rapidly in numbers and in power. The French court reaped only a harvest of infamy. Other nations expressed their sympathies with the Huguenots, and their abhorrence of the French Catholics. The French ambassador received open and marked insult from the Queen of England, who turned her back upon him when he was ushered into her presence. Persecution of the Huguenots grew less severe from that hour forward ; and in 1593 the Edict of Nantes was put forth, securing to the Huguenots their liberties thenceforward by solemn pledges.

V.

Catharine de Medici lived seventeen years after the St. Bartholomew massacre, and retained her diabolical spirit to the very last moment of her life. But her son, King Charles, became the prey to remorse the most terrible, and openly showed his brutal mother the depth of detestation and abhorrence in which he held her. Her influence over him was gone, and as a result, he was destined to be the next victim of her terrible genius. She was an adept in the use of poisons, and alchemy had been her favourite study throughout her life. It has been seen how she destroyed her son Francis, by causing poison to be dropped into his ear. The manner in which she caused the death of Charles was even more subtle and more dreadful.

Charles was passionately fond of the then popular amusement of hawking. Catharine therefore procured a work on hawking, which she knew her son would read if it

were placed in his way. The leaves of this book she caused to be lightly stuck together by a thin gluten, and this gluten was impregnated with poisonous matter. Her scheme worked as she intended; Charles found the book and proceeded to read it. In order to separate the leaves, he would moisten his fingers on his tongue, and thus the poison in the gluten entered his system and did its work—slowly but surely. He died within two years of the great massacre “sweating blood from every pore,” and crying out in bitter remorse. It is the remembrance of his dreadful death, and his agony of repentance for the crime into which his mother had driven him, that bids us speak as gently as we may of this weak and miserable man. The piteous plaintiveness of his cries to his nurse cannot be rendered into any English words that will do them justice. “Ah, *nourrice!*” he would cry, “my dear, my good nurse! What blood, what murders! Oh! what bad counsels have I followed! Oh,

Lord God, pardon me, and grant me mercy ! ”

It is but meet justice to this young man's memory to allude to the stories current among certain historians, to the effect that Charles, with his own gun, united in the great massacre, and fired from the windows of the Louvre upon certain Huguenots who endeavoured to escape by swimming the Seine. I can find no reliable authority whatever for any such belief; and the *vraisemblance* of the occasion calls for no such belief. It is on better authority, however, that the following story is received: When the Duke of Guise was about departing with his followers for the house of Coligni, he received a note from the frantic king, countermanding his order for the massacre—which the duke, remarking “It is too late,” placed in his pocket, and so galloped away.

Catharine now trusted that, Charles being dead, her hour of supremacy had come, for her younger son, Francis,

possessed a spirit kindred to his mother's, and with him as king she could rule at will. But there was another son—Henry III.—whose claim to the throne was first, because he was the elder. True, he was absent in Poland, of which country he had been made king through his mother's efforts; but Poland was not France, and as soon as Henry heard that Charles was dead, he ran away from his Polish subjects and returned to Paris, where he claimed and mounted his throne. So Catharine was disappointed again, for she could not sway Henry to her will so easily. She succeeded, however, in again plunging the country into war. But the consequence of this was not as she desired. The only marked result of the war seemed to be the covering of her old rival, the Duke of Guise, with glory and power. Upon this man, the brutal assassin-leader of the St. Bartholomew massacre, the next blow of Catharine's murderous hand was now to fall.

The Catholic populace almost idolized

this formidable man. They would have been willing that he should have mounted the throne of France by force, expelling Henry and his mother, or killing them. Indeed, some authorities say that a plot of this kind was on foot. Be this true or not, it is certain that Catharine, playing upon Henry's fears, made him believe it true ; and the arrangements for the assassination of the Duke of Guise were accordingly made. He was invited to meet the king in his cabinet, at an early hour in the day. The duke came at the appointed hour, tall and majestic in mien, and parted the curtain leading from an anteroom into that where the king sat. At that moment, as previously arranged, one of the king's body-guard ran the duke through the body ; and at the same moment others of the guard fell upon him. He sank down dead, and Henry, coming out to look at the body, spurned it with his foot.

Catharine de Medici at that time lay ill in bed. Henry himself carried to her the

intelligence that the Duke of Guise was dead, and that they need no longer fear his attempts to usurp the throne.

“It is well,” said Catharine, without evincing the lightest touch of emotion, either of pleasure or of sorrow; “now look to your throne, or you may find it less safe under you than you think. Be vigilant and resolute, or you lose all.”

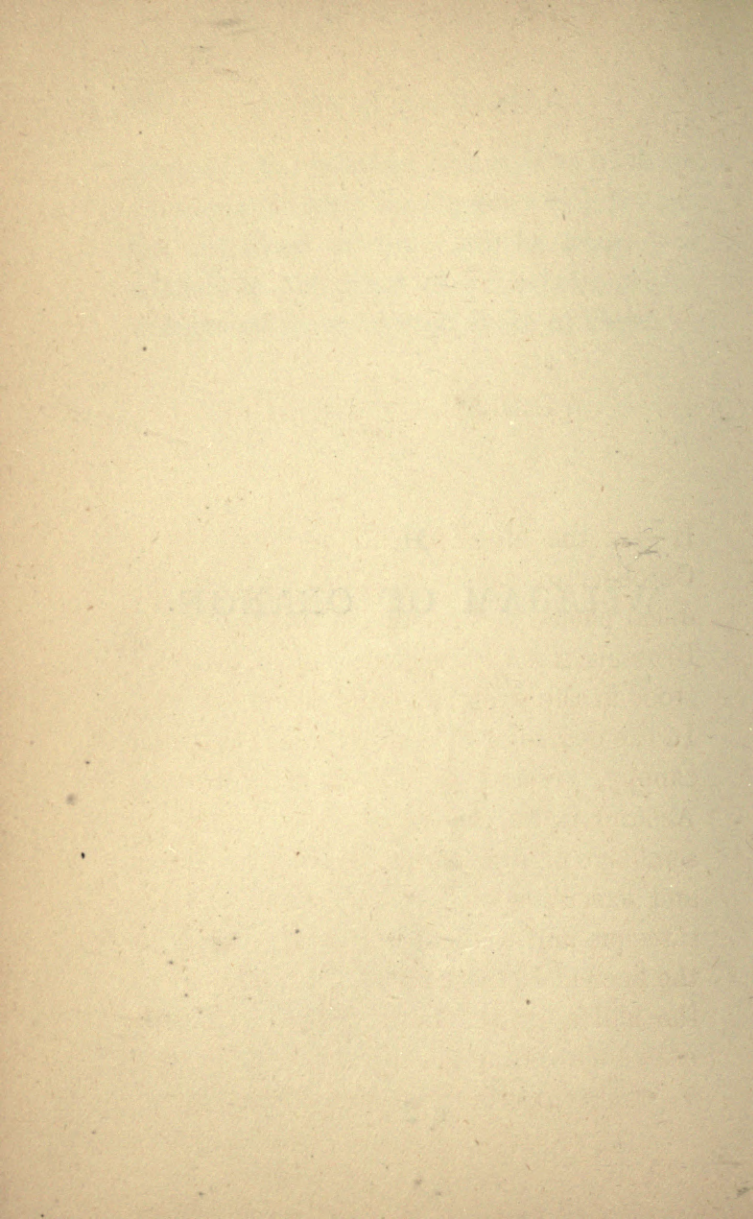
With these words this stony-hearted old woman dismissed her son. Twelve days later she died, without remorse, or any sign of repentance for the crimes of her long, dark life.

From first to last this miserable creature, to whom human life was a bagatelle, and with whom the thirst for power outbalanced every other interest of existence, was doomed to disappointment and defeat. Like most assassins, she imbrued her hands in blood in vain. Even the son whom she left upon the throne was assassinated in his turn soon after his mother's death. And it is a sufficient comment on the part *religion* .

played in the political contentions of those days to state that the dagger which let out the life-blood of this Catholic king, was wielded by the hand of a Catholic priest, avenger of the murdered Duke of Guise.

II.

WILLIAM OF ORANGE.



WILLIAM OF ORANGE.

I.

It was the afternoon of the 25th day of October, in the year 1555. In the old ducal palace of Brabant, in the gay city of Brussels, a newly-erected stage or platform stood at the western end of the great hall. In the centre of this stage was a splendid canopy, erected as a temporary throne. Around it, on tapestried seats, sat an assemblage of dignitaries, grave magistrates and executive officers, arrayed in the picturesque and brilliant uniforms peculiar to the ancient Netherlanders. In the body of the hall a great multitude was gathered. All were awaiting the appearance of Charles V., their emperor, who was on that day to

abdicate the throne in favour of his son, Philip II.

The clock struck three. Charles V. entered, a prematurely decrepit old man, with white and bristling hair, shaggy grey beard, wide forehead, and dark blue eyes, tottering on crippled legs, and supported on one side by a crutch, on the other by a tall and handsome young man of twenty-two, then simply the emperor's page and confidant, but afterward the grandest figure in the history of his country. His features were dark, symmetrical, and well chiselled; his head small, but sturdily set; his hair, moustache, and peaked beard, of a dark-brown hue; his eyes brown and thoughtful; his forehead expansive, and, even at that early age, marked with lines of thought, for he was the emperor's adviser in all cares of state. His dress was magnificent in the highest degree, as the times in general, and the present ceremony in particular, rendered necessary.

This young man was William, Prince of

Orange ; and this occasion was his *débût* as the hero of the long and eventful drama which has rendered his name one of the most illustrious in modern history.

Philip II. on that day took the Netherlands throne. The abdicating monarch recommended to his son's confidence the prince who had served him so ably. Philip, at first adopting the recommendation, was afterward led to believe that William was his enemy, and the enemy of his throne.

In the following year, Charles V. also abdicated the throne of Spain, in favour of Philip. When Philip, in 1559, left the Netherlands to make his residence in Spain, he publicly insulted William, on the eve of his departure. The government of the Netherlands was bestowed upon Margaret of Parma, a woman wholly under the influence of Cardinal Granvelle, an ambitious, unscrupulous prelate. Under the government of this wily minister of evil were the Dutch doomed to suffer.

In 1559 William of Orange, then still in

Philip's confidence, was despatched to France, to negotiate with the French king a treaty of peace. The Frenchman indiscreetly communicated to William a plan which was on foot, whereby the Inquisition was to be introduced into the Netherlands, with all its most horrible machinery, when, to use the prince's own words, "It would need but to look askance at an image to be cast into the flames." He made no sign before the French monarch of his horror at this news; but from that hour his purpose was firm to set his life against this monstrous iniquity. Himself a Catholic, it was not a feeling of religious opposition that animated him, but simply one of sympathy and compassion, as he avowed, "for so many virtuous men and women thus devoted to massacre."

From this time forth, the life of William of Orange exhibits a striking likeness to that of Abraham Lincoln, which I shall seek rather to indicate than to illustrate by comparison. Although he ultimately

became the instrument of the Dutch Republic's creation on a free basis, emancipated for ever from the shackles of that slavery of conscience which had cursed the land, it was not with a purpose to reach that end that he was first animated. His primary motive was to combat encroachments upon the rights of the Netherlands—to baulk the tyranny of the bigoted monarch in his efforts to obtain an unbounded influence over his Dutch empire. When, at twenty-six years of age, William stood arrayed against the Inquisition, and against the proscription of religious freedom, he simply stood where he was placed by the inevitable logic of right and justice. He was not widely known among his countrymen; he only awoke their admiration, their love, their devotion, through successive stages, until at last he was recognized by them as their champion, and was looked upon by them as the saviour of his country, in the hands of God. Through the fire of trial put upon his country, in which he

stood as the central figure, he struggled upward and onward, against enemies and obstacles the most bitter and the most appalling, but never quailed—never faltered. Throughout his whole public career, he was the mark for slanders the most cutting and contumelious, although his life was one steady and consistent refutation of slander. From the hour when he was charged with having murdered his wife, Anne of Egmont, onward, he was accused of every mean, base, cruel, and detestable vice and crime known to humanity; but a purer man perhaps never lived. To these charges he seldom gave any notice, and never bestowed angry words upon any one about him. His manner, while never cringing or fearful, was gentle and kind to every one. An historian who spoke most bitterly of the prince gave his character just eulogy, saying, “Never did an arrogant or indiscreet word fall from his lips. He upon no occasion manifested anger to his servants, however much they might be

in fault," etc. He also was naturally gay and lively in disposition, fond of genial conversation, and possessing a familiar yet dignified manner with all who had to do with him. Caution was one of his most predominant characteristics, so that by the radicals of his day he was deemed too slow; but he did not espouse the side of freedom in order to convert that freedom again into slavery; and when the religious reformers, who had succeeded in banishing the Catholic Inquisition, sought to introduce a milder but no less reprehensible slavery over those who rejected the now popular faith, William's was the hand which restrained these radicals and prevented the outrage. He cherished no malice against enemies, and seemed almost too lenient with offenders. His unimpeachable honesty was another striking trait in his character. In 1564, when a gangrene had spread through the whole government, and corruption and fraud ruled with a high hand—when all public functionaries were notoriously and

outrageously venal—William of Orange set his breast against the sea of poison, and was uncontaminated by it. “Of all the conspicuous men in the land,” says Motley, “he was the only one whose worst enemy had never hinted through the whole course of his public career that his hands had known contamination.” And this not through mere negative virtue, which is almost no virtue at all; for he was sorely tempted, being plunged in a deep sea of debt and pecuniary embarrassment throughout his public career, though wealthy enough while still in private life. A picture of the prince, when the cares of state, and of the great cause in which he was champion, had begun to tell upon his physique, represents him as careworn of face, thin of figure, and sleepless of habit; and though still genial and gentle to all, a deep sadness could be read in his face.

How like an exposition of the traits and character of Abraham Lincoln does all this read! To it, with singular fidelity of like-

ness, must be added the history of his life labours, with their result, and the final going out of this serene and beautiful light before the breath of the assassination fiend.

II.

In 1563, William of Orange united with two other noblemen of the day in an effort to induce Philip (now in Spain, of which country he was king, as well as emperor of the Netherlands) to withdraw Cardinal Granvelle, representing that there was danger of rebellion among the people unless this offensive prelate were removed from the power he held, through Margaret of Parma, his tool, regent of the province. Philip, who was one of the most earnest advocates of the Inquisition, was enraged at this action of William of Orange, but dared not refuse to comply with the people's wishes. So Granvelle was withdrawn; but to recompense himself, Philip sent to his subordinate Netherlands, from Spain, an

army of Spanish and Italian soldiers, under the Duke of Alva. Philip by no means relinquished his purpose of introducing the Inquisition into the province. In 1566 a remonstrance against the proposed introduction was offered to Philip by 300 noblemen, headed by Louis, brother of William; but it was rejected with scorn, and the petitioners styled *gueux*, or beggars. This treatment of a band of the first gentlemen of the country created great indignation among them. "They call us beggars!" cried Brederode, a tall, black-bearded nobleman of commanding mien; "let us accept the name!" Putting on a leathern wallet such as beggars of that day wore, and taking a large wooden bowl such as the beggars carried, he filled the bowl with wine, and draining its entire contents at a draught, cried out, "Long live the beggars!" The excited noblemen took up the cry; each donned the wallet and drained the bowl in turn, and with shouts and laugh-

ter they repeated the thrilling cry which often thereafter rung over fields of blood and carnage, "*Vivent les gueux!*" It became their shibboleth, and in after-years their enemies learned to dread] the name of "The Beggars."

The Duke of Alva, with his soldiers, advanced into the excited and rebellious Netherlands. Several noblemen of consequence were arrested as traitors, and executed. Granvelle, the determined cardinal, who was in Spain, at Philip's elbow, was rejoiced at this, but demanded that William of Orange should also be arrested and executed. "If this fish is not caught," said Granvelle, "the duke's fishing is good for nothing." Accordingly, William, together with other noblemen, was summoned to appear before the infamous "blood council," with which trial was a mockery, and death almost a certainty. William refused to appear, and denied the jurisdiction of that unholy body. Thereupon Alva declared William outlawed,

seized the prince's estates in the Netherlands, and quartered his soldiers thereon—also seizing William's only son, and sending him to Spain as a hostage.

This was the commencement of a long and bloody war. William of Orange took the field against the Duke of Alva—not against King Philip, toward whom William still professed entire loyalty. The prince held the duke to be a satrap who had invaded his (William's) domains, and had acted in his late behaviour without the king's orders. But efforts subsequently made to effect a peace, showed that Philip would not permit a peace that left the Netherlands freedom of conscience. Unless they would accept the Inquisition, the war should continue.

In 1581, it having become apparent to the Netherlands that they must either accept the Inquisition at last, or separate boldly from their allegiance to Philip, they chose the latter alternative; and on the 26th of July in that year they promulgated

their Declaration of Independence. On the 5th of the same month, William of Orange had, after being urgently pressed, accepted the "entire authority as sovereign and chief of the land, as long as the war should continue." Without this limitation as to time, William would not accept the sovereignty. Soon after, this limitation was secretly cancelled by the States, without the knowledge of William. They were determined that the man who had served them so well, should continue permanently to serve them. And he did so continue until his death.

In the previous year, Cardinal Granvelle had drawn up a paper which is known to the world as the Ban, one of the most infamous papers that ever disgraced the annals of tyranny. By it, Philip offered a magnificent prize to the murderer who should assassinate the good William of Orange, whom it charged with being a great criminal and a "wretched hypocrite." The dastard who should take the

life of this man was to be rewarded with money to the value of 50,000*l.* sterling (equivalent to 200,000*l.* in the present day); "if he have committed any crime," continued the Ban, "however heinous, we promise to pardon him;" and, strongest temptation of all to the vulgar mind, the assassin was to be rewarded with admission into the ranks of Spain's nobility—the haughtiest nobility on the face of the globe. By this monstrously infamous scheme did Philip seek to be rid of the man who fought his tyranny with hard and bitter hand—the man who had resisted ever effort of the king's emissaries to win him over by bribery. But here shone forth the lustre of William's honest and incorruptible nature, with pure and steady light. He had been approached when his cause seemed tottering to decay, when he was overwhelmed with cares, harassed with trials, plunged in a wide sea of doubt and distress; and even in that hour, when distinctly given to understand

that he had but to name his own terms, and forsake the cause to which he had given his life, he turned his back upon his tempters, and wooed freedom with renewed vigour. "Neither for property nor for life," were the words of William of Orange, "neither for wife nor for children, will I mix in my cup a single drop of treason."

III.

It was but natural that the glittering prize offered by the Ban should set to work a host of murderous but ambitious men, each seeking after his own fashion in what manner he could compass the death of the Prince of Orange. It may be supposed that wherever William moved, his path was followed by the bloodthirsty wretches who sought his life. But the States provided for Father William (as he was now affectionately styled) a body-guard, which left no hope of a public assassination with a subsequent escape for the murderer. So that the attempts made

upon William's life were most probably in very small proportion to the number of men who watched night and day for an opportunity to make such attempt.

On Sunday, the 18th day of March, 1582, the first open attempt on the prince's life was made. In some respects, which the reader will hardly fail to observe, the manner of this attempt was strikingly like that which the assassin Booth made with such terrible success on the life of Lincoln. The prince dined with a company of "noble gentlemen" at his own house on that day, and was in fine spirits, having participated with all his accustomed geniality in the lively conversation at the table. On leaving the table, William led the way to his own apartments, pausing on the threshold of the antechamber to show his guests a piece of tapestry on which some Spanish soldiers were represented. At this moment a young man of small stature and sallow complexion appeared, and handed him a

petition. As he took the paper, the young man suddenly held a pistol close to the prince's head, and fired, the ball entering the neck under the right ear, passing through the roof of the mouth, and coming out under the left jaw, carrying with it two teeth. The prince's beard was set on fire, so closely was the pistol held to his head. But at the same time the fire from the weapon cauterized the wound, which otherwise would probably have caused his death by bleeding, before the wound could have been dressed. The prince on recovering his consciousness, which he did as he stood, though at first blinded and stunned, called out quickly, "Do not kill him—I forgive him my death;" thus illustrating the kind and forgiving disposition he possessed in such a remarkable degree. But before his words were uttered, the young man had been pierced in thirty-two vital places by the weapons of the halberdiers, while two of the noblemen present had already run him through with

their rapiers. The prince lay long in a critical condition, his life being alternately hoped for and despaired of; but he recovered at last, and on the 2nd of May following went to the great cathedral, where he offered up thanksgiving, surrounded by a vast multitude sobbing for joy at the deliverance of the man they so loved. The would-be assassin in this instance was one Juan Jaureguy, a servant of a Spanish merchant in Antwerp, who had entered into the affair purely as a commercial speculation.

In the following July a second attempt was made—this time by poison. One Basa, an Italian, and Salseda, a Spaniard, undertook the murder by this means, but were early detected and imprisoned. Basa committed suicide in prison. Salseda was torn to pieces by four horses—a horse being fastened to each of his limbs, and then, stripped of all harness, the four were whipped till they ran in different directions with the mutilated remains.

In March, 1583, Pietro Dordogno was

executed for the third attempt to assassinate the prince, he having confessed that he came from Spain expressly for that purpose. In April, 1584, Hans Hanzoon was executed for the fourth attempt to accomplish the base deed, by means of gunpowder placed under William's seat in church, and under his house in Flushing, where Hanzoon lived. The fifth known attempt was frustrated by the honourable conduct of Le Goth, a French officer, whom the Duke of Parma released from prison on condition that he would poison William; but Le Goth, rightly holding that a compact so villainous was of no binding effect upon him, exposed the plot to the prince, and became one of his most faithful adherents. It is with the sixth and last attempt that we now have to deal, for it was successful.

IV.

In the drowsy little city of Delft still stands a plain, two-storied brick house, with a red-tiled roof, opposite the "old kirk," a plain, old-fashioned brick church

with lancet windows. In that house, in the summer of 1584, William of Orange resided, having removed thither from Antwerp in the previous year. The stillness of that canal-intersected old city, whose traffic was mostly conducted on the noiseless waters of the canals, and whose clean and shaded streets were seldom disturbed by the rumble of wheels, was about to be broken by an event of the bloodiest and most cruel character—an event which should carry grief and lamentation into many a peaceful household, and whose horror should come thrilling down the lapse of centuries, to stir the blood of the living in our day.

At an obscure village in Burgundy, several years preceding the year of the assassination, the prince of darkness had been at work in the breast of a young man of insignificant aspect and seemingly inoffensive nature, named Balthazar Gérard. This young man had long cherished the purpose of murdering William. When but twenty

years of age he one day struck his dagger into a door, exclaiming passionately, "Would that this were the heart of Orange!" The publication of the Ban seemed to give directness and force to his purposes. From that hour, he devoted himself to the one object of his life. He proceeded to Luxembourg, and there learned that the assassination already had been performed by Juan Jaureguy. But, this proving untrue, he was again aroused to action; for he had, meantime, become a clerk in the employ of Count Mansfield, Governor of Luxembourg. His first work was to secretly take impressions in wax of the Governor's seals, in order to offer them to the Orange party, and thus win their confidence. He was detained in Luxembourg for some time, by various circumstances, but at last, in March, 1584, he departed. Arriving at Treves, he confided his plan to two Jesuit fathers in the college there, who did not disapprove of his determination, while one of them was

warm in his approbation, promising Balthazar a place among the martyrs should he be killed in the attempt. At Tournay he was greatly comforted and encouraged by another Jesuit to whom he made confession. His next step was to address to the Duke of Parma a letter, most carefully worded, laying before that personage a general plan of his project. This letter he presented in person to the duke; but Parma was almost disheartened in his long-maintained efforts to have William killed. He had paid money to numerous cut-throats of villainous aspect, on the promise to perform the deed, but without result. When he therefore looked upon this "obscure, undersized, thin-bearded runaway clerk," he bestowed little attention on the adventurer, and dismissed him with no encouragement. Learning more about Balthazar afterwards, Parma consented to hear his plans in detail. After hearing them, he so far modified his opinion of the clerk as to promise him the offered reward

in case of success ; but it is notable that the duke refused to furnish Balthazar even the sum of fifty crowns to defray necessary expenses. Balthazar was therefore unable to buy himself so much as a weapon with which to commit the murder. But, nothing daunted, he set himself to work with the means at his command, and by skilful manœuvrings, and the practice of an actor's shrewdest arts, he succeeded in finally getting into the service of Noel de Caron, adherent of Orange, then setting forth on a mission to the Duke of Anjou. Soon after this, while in France, Balthazar obtained permission to convey to William of Orange the news of the Duke of Anjou's death. With this important mission, Balthazar confidently relied on eventually obtaining access to William's person.

Arriving in Delft, Balthazar left his despatches. It was early in the morning of a Sunday, and the prince was yet abed. To Balthazar's surprise and no little agitation, he was introduced into William's bed-

room, in order to relate fuller particulars of Anjou's death. What must have been the emotions of this bloodthirsty assassin at finding himself for the first time face to face with the man whose life he had sought for so many years with such an unflinching purpose ! There he lay, in bed, alone, helpless ; while his assassin, through his guise of a pious, psalm-singing Calvinistic youth, gloated with eager eyes upon the spectacle before him. But in his wildest moments of hopefulness, Balthazar had never dreamed of an hour like this ; hence he was unprepared. He had provided no means of escape in such an event ; he had no weapons. In fact, he had not even money to buy weapons. And it was with the money that the kind Prince of Orange gave him in charity, that Balthazar went off and purchased the pair of pistols, one of which took that prince's life.

On Tuesday, the 10th day of July, 1584, at high noon, William of Orange, with his wife on his arm, led the way to the

dining-room in the old brick house at Delft. He wore a wide-brimmed soft hat, with a cord of silk about the crown; a ruffled collar surrounded his neck; a medal of the never-to-be-forgotten Beggars, or *gueulx*, rested on his breast; and over his well-worn leathern doublet was a loose grey surcoat; while the wide, slashed underclothes of the period made up his dress, in the plainest fashion of his time. At the doorway Balthazar Gérard presented himself, with pale and agitated face, and asked for a passport. William (although he had been informed by residents of Cologne of the attempt about to be made on his life) was as serene and undisturbed as usual, and took no notice of Gérard's manner; but his wife, more keenly awake to the dangers which beset her husband, anxiously questioned the prince, and remarked in an undertone that "she had never seen so villainous a countenance." But William was undisturbed; he directed a secretary to give Gérard (or Francis Guion, the orphaned

Calvinist, as he supposed him) the passport. He then went on into the dining-room, and remained over his dinner till two o'clock, conversing cheerfully with his family and his guest, the burgomaster of Leewarden.

The dining-room was on the ground floor. The prince's private apartments were above. The wooden stairway leading up to them had its foot in a little square vestibule opening off from the dining-room. This vestibule had on one of its sides an obscure arch, sunk deep in the wall, and communicating by a portal with the narrow lane at the side of the house. A flood of light streamed over the stairway from a large window half-way up, but the arch just mentioned was completely in shadow. In this arch Balthazar Gérard awaited his victim. The clock struck two. The good prince entered the vestibule, talking pleasantly to the old burgomaster, with a benevolent smile on his face. He passed to the foot of the stairway and placed his

foot on the lowest step. Gérard crept from his place of concealment. The prince's foot was on the second stair, when there rang through the little room the report of a pistol, and he fell backward into the arms of Jacob Van Maldere, one of his attendants, exclaiming, "*Mon Dieu, ayez pitié de mon âme ! Mon Dieu, ayez pitié de ce pauvre peuple !*" (My God, have pity on my soul ! My God have pity on this poor people !) These were his last words. In a few minutes he was dead.

Balthazar Gérard had poisoned the balls of the pistol, and he did not pause to note the result of his shot, for he knew it was fatal. Into the arch he sprang, and through the side-door out into the narrow lane. He had thrown away his weapons, and ran swiftly up the lane, designing to scale the ramparts, and leap into the moat. He had provided himself with bladders having pipes attached, so that he could blow them full of air, and they would help him in swimming across the moat, where

he had a horse in waiting. But just as the ramparts were close before him, he stumbled over a heap of rubbish. The miss-step was fatal. A number of pages and halberdiers had given chase when he ran, and as he struggled to his knees after falling, they seized him, and returned with him to the house. He did not deny the deed, but gloried in it. The city magistrates immediately convened a court in the prince's house, and held a preliminary examination of the prisoner, after which he was heavily ironed and thrown into a dungeon.

V.

The prince was laid in the tomb, amid the tears of a weeping people, on the 3rd of August, 1584. But he had lived long enough to establish the emancipated commonwealth on a secure foundation, and to give existence to an independent country, liberated for ever from Spanish tyranny. His death, however, prevented the union

of all the Netherlands into one republic, a purpose which would doubtless have been accomplished had his life been spared. That life stands to all coming time as its own noblest testimonial. He accomplished a great and glorious work, and enshrined himself for ever in the affections of his people. "As long as he lived," says Motley, "he was the guiding-star of a whole brave nation, and when he died, the little children cried in the streets."

The popular grief at the death of this man, and the popular rage against the fanatical assassin, may be appreciated more fully by Americans than by any other people of the present day ; for a like grief prevailed among them with like occasion, but a few years ago ; and it is doubtless true that their first fury of indignation against Wilkes Booth was equal to that which the Netherlands felt against Gérard. But the tortures their anger would have led them to inflict upon Booth would never have been put in practice had he been cap-

tured alive, for our present civilization would have revolted at it, as it revolts at the sufferings of Balthazar Gérard. William of Orange had saved from torture other men who had attacked him with the same deadly intent, and he would have done as much for Gérard; but the prince was gone, and there was no man in the Netherlands who could or would intercede for his assassin. He was put upon the rack, and from day to day endured the most frightful pains with a composure so astounding that his judges believed he was protected by witchcraft. In the intervals of repose in the torture he conversed calmly and intelligently, and avowed that the prospect of dying a thousand deaths would not deter him from again attempting the crime, if he were free and William living. A shirt from the body of a hospital patient supposed to be a sorcerer, was put upon Gérard, but, as may be supposed, it had no effect in breaking up his wonderful composure and fortitude. He

would raise his bloody head from the bench and cry, blasphemously, "*Ecce homo!*" (Behold the man!) To the judges, in return for the food they gave him in prison, he said that he would serve as their advocate in the courts of heaven. He wrote deliberately a full account of the motives that had impelled him to the commission of the crime, and the means by which he had succeeded in bringing it to pass; but he took care, in what he said, to avoid implicating the Duke of Parma.

The frightful sentence which was finally passed upon the assassin was carried out to the letter, with a cruelty so fierce that the gentle spirit of the assassinated prince might almost have been expected to rise from the grave to protest against it. It was on the 14th of July that the horrible spectacle took place, in the presence of a jeering crowd of spectators. His joints had been already put out of place by the rack, and his body was scarred and roasted by the flames of previous torture, but he

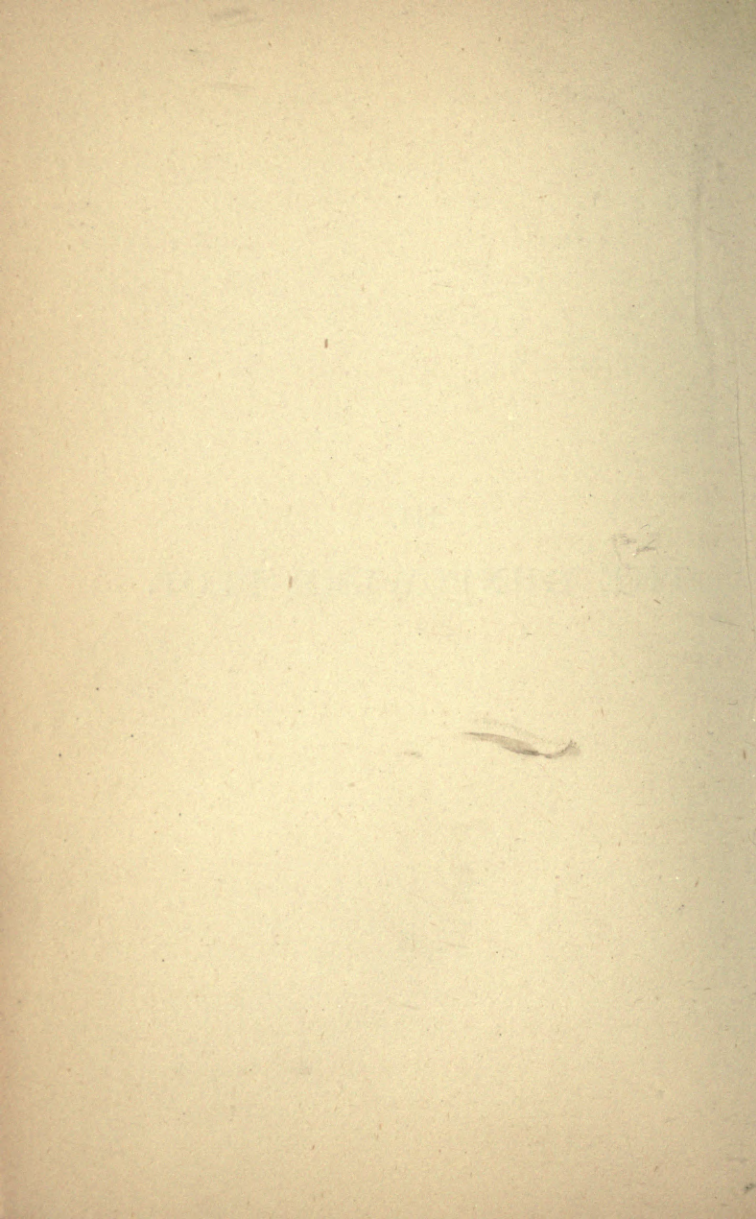
mounted the scaffold with calm and unshrinking nerve. The pistol which had sent the fatal ball into the prince's body was broken in pieces by the hammer of one of the executioners, as the first step in the ceremony. In doing this, the executioner was hit upon the ear and hurt, by the flying off of the head of the hammer. The crowd laughed over this mishap, and the culprit joined in the laugh. Gérard's right hand, which had pointed the fatal weapon, was burned off with a red-hot iron, and even this excruciating torture wrung no cry from the man. His flesh was then torn from his body with pincers, in six different places. His legs and arms were then chopped off close to his body, and his bowels torn out by cutting open the abdomen. Still Gérard lived. It was not until his heart was cut out and thrown in his face that his lips ceased their motion. His head was then chopped off—and the sentence was executed.

Thus was the crime of the fanatic

avenged—for fanatic he was. While animated to some degree by the reward offered by the Ban, it is true that Balthazar Gérard believed himself serving the cause of his king and his God by ridding the earth of an enemy of religion and humanity. For himself, he was upheld in his sufferings on the scaffold by a firm belief that he should reign with the saints and martyrs in Paradise. The reward promised to the assassin was paid to his father and mother, for what Parma termed “the laudable and generous deed” their son had performed. They were made nobles of the land, and received the three seignories of Livremont, Hostal, and Dampmartin—formerly the property of William of Orange. At a later day, on the union of Franche Comté with France, the patents of nobility the Gérards held were torn in pieces and trampled under foot by a French Governor.

III.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT.



THE GUNPOWDER PLOT.

I.

THE stories of history make long strides in their onward movement. Often the opening chapters introduce you to characters, not one of whom will figure in the grand *dénouement*. In history, men are often nothing but puppets; the power that moves them first is transferred, in its course of growth, from generation to generation, and perhaps works out its tragedies in their children.

A full exhibit of the events which led to that most extraordinary crime known as the Gunpowder Plot, would involve a long history of the religious wars which raged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

I have given my readers one page of this in the story of William of Orange. Then, we found the oppressor wearing the colours of Catholicism. In the period and on the scene of the gunpowder plot, the oppressor wore the colours of Protestantism. I will go back no further, in giving the story of the gunpowder plot, than to the year 1587, which beheld the execution of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots.

On the evening of the 7th of February, in that year, Mary Stuart sat in her apartment in her prison of Fotheringay Castle, in England, a beautiful woman of forty-five, whose face bore traces of care and suffering, for her life had been no holiday journey through the years. Her solitude was broken by the entrance of two noblemen, who saluted the captive queen with the respect belonging to her exalted rank, though they were the bearers of cruel tidings. They were the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury. Without unnecessary delay they informed Mary they had been com-

missioned to tell her that her life would end on the scaffold on the following morning, at eight o'clock. The intelligence came most unexpectedly, and the poor lady showed her surprise in her countenance; but she did not turn pale, nor exhibit terror. On the contrary, she said to her visitors, with a sweet but plaintive smile, that she was prepared to die. "I could not believe," she said, "that my sister Elizabeth, Queen of England, had consented to my death, or would execute sentence upon one who is not subject to the laws and jurisdiction of England. Nevertheless, since this is her will, I am content. Death will put an end to all my miseries, and I welcome its coming. That soul would be unworthy the felicities of heaven, which could not support the body under the horrors of the last passage to those realms of bliss. I have only this request to make now : that you will permit my last moments to be consoled by the presence of my confessor."

To her great distress, the queen was told that this request could not be complied with; that no Catholic priest could be permitted to approach her; but that she should be attended by a Protestant divine, Dr. Fletcher, the Dean of Peterborough. She refused to listen to this proposal, for she knew the character of this minister, and considered the proposal an insult to her faith. The Earl of Kent, with a brutality worthy of severe condemnation, upbraided the defenceless woman, pronouncing her a child of Satan, and declaring that he was glad she was doomed to death.

“Your life would have been the death of our religion,” said he, with the coarseness of a thorough bigot; “your death will be its life.”

The two earls took their leave; and, from that hour till the hour of her departure for the scaffold the next morning, Mary occupied herself in the preparations for death. Her manner continued cheerful

to the last. Calling her servants about her, she pledged their prosperity in a glass of wine, and they all knelt down and pledged her in return. A tender and tearful leave-taking was undergone; and the servants left her to her lonely vigils. When morning came, she dressed herself in a rich robe of silk and velvet, remarking that she must not forget the respect due to her station. The sheriff, entering her room, bade her follow him, which she did, with a guard at each arm. A scene of the most affecting description took place in the hall through which she passed, where her servants and adherents were gathered to bid her farewell. She addressed language of comfort and cheer to them, herself calm and composed, though sobs and lamentations filled the hall. Wishing to have some of her servants attend her to the scaffold, she was shocked by the further brutality of the Earl of Kent, who expressed a fear that they would perform some superstitious rite above her body,

and dip their handkerchiefs in her blood. Mary's indignation was awakened, and she turned a withering glance upon the earl. "I am cousin to your queen," she cried, "and descended from the blood royal of Henry VII., and a married Queen of France, and an anointed Queen of Scotland." This outburst of royal pride secured her her wish, and four of her men and two of her maids accompanied her into another hall, where a black scaffold had been erected, and the grim executioners confronted her. The hall was crowded with spectators. Here, at the moment when the executioners were preparing to take hold of her, the bigoted Dean of Peterborough insulted her by coming forward and reading her a lecture on her heresy, in spite of her protestations, saying, in substance, unless she abjured the Catholic faith then and there, she would in a few moments fall into hell. Mary frequently interrupted his harangue, saying, "I was born in this religion, I have lived in this

religion, and in this religion I am resolved to die." The Earl of Kent also put in his word, on observing her clasping a crucifix lovingly in her hands. At last this disgraceful scene was ended. Mary disrobed herself, smiling gently, and remarking that she was unaccustomed to undress before so large a company. Her servants burst into tears and lamentations, but she placed her finger on her lips, and enjoined them to be silent; gave them her blessing, and asked their prayers; and then lay quietly down and placed her head on the block. A handkerchief was placed over her face, and the executioner struck her on the skull, inflicting a ghastly wound, but without shaking her brave spirit. Two fierce blows of the axe severed her head from her body; and the executioner, seizing the head by the hair, held it aloft, dripping blood, the face still in agonizing convulsions.

Thus did the oppressive spirit of the bigotry of that day make its victim of a

beautiful, accomplished, and singularly amiable woman. The question of her guilt or innocence of complicity in certain crimes charged against her, is to this day a theme of discussion; but there is no question as to the fact that she really was executed because she was a Catholic. The memory of her sufferings was not likely to allay the fever of the Catholics' hatred toward the tyranny that oppressed them in England, and the rankling of this bitter wound added strength to the fury of the hour and the bad passions of the period.

II.

Seventeen years passed. The Protestant queen who occupied the throne of England when Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded, was now dead, and she had been succeeded by James I., son of the Catholic queen whose execution I have briefly described. The Catholics still were chafing under the grinding laws enacted during Elizabeth's reign,

and they hoped that James, the son of Mary Stuart, would exert his influence to soften the pains under which they travailed. By these laws any person over sixteen years of age who refused for four successive weeks to attend a Protestant place of worship, was committed to prison. If thereafter he persisted in "this evil course" for three months, he was banished from the country. If he refused to depart, or if he returned after banishment, he was put to death. Under these laws, and others of like severity, great numbers of Catholics were murdered, and others driven from their native land, while those who remained were compelled to practise an unwilling hypocrisy to save themselves from these dreadful punishments. The infamous Star Chamber Court was also under full sway in the realm—a body of men appointed by the reigning monarch, and possessing unlimited powers of punishment by fines, imprisonment, and the whipping-post. Another court, still more monstrous in its character, was known

as the Court of High Commission. It had jurisdiction of the crime of heresy—a crime so indefinable in character that scarcely any one was safe. Further, there was martial law—a name whose terrors the people of our day can scarcely appreciate; during the American rebellion its exercise interfered not at all with the safety of society; but in that day, he who came under the suspicion of treason, as hundreds did on the slightest pretext, was executed in cold blood without even the barest formalities of trial, while hundreds of others languished in prison. In one period of Elizabeth's reign, martial law even hung numerous men in London who were not so much as suspected of treason, and were guilty of no greater offence than that disorderly conduct in the streets, which we in our day might call "rowdyism."

Besides these three courts, there was still another arbitrary body, which laid no claim to be called a court, which had no trials, and inflicted no penalties, but which seized

men wherever it chose, and threw them into gaol on suspicion—in many cases loading them with chains and confining them in dungeons, where they suffered greatly. Sometimes the gaols—of which there were many—were literally crowded with “prisoners of state.” The horrible rack very commonly was employed to extort confessions. In short, the life of an unorthodox person was full of terrors, and the arbitrary executions of the French Revolution itself hardly more frightful in their licence.

James I. having ascended the throne of England, therefore, at the death of Elizabeth, the Catholics entertained hopes that their liberties would be in some measure restored to them, and Elizabeth’s iniquitous laws annulled. The memory of Mary’s execution was still fresh in their minds, and they hoped that the son, remembering his mother, might espouse the cause of that religion which had been assaulted through her. They knew that the son was a Pro-

testant, as his father had been, but they believed him tolerant towards the Catholic faith. In this they were disappointed; and it may be imagined with what despair they heard the new king express his determination to rigidly enforce all the laws that had been enacted against them. Their anger turned fiercely against James; for some historians declare that he had encouraged these hopes in the Catholics, before coming into possession of his crown. Be this as it may, the project of assassinating him was now entertained by certain Catholics, and there was little about his character to turn away the dagger. He possessed none of those amiabilities and excellences which I have portrayed as belonging to the good Prince of Orange, which ought to have disarmed all personal hatred. He was a very learned man, but a pedant, that most offensive of characters in literature. In his habits he was grossly intemperate; and with all his hatred of Catholic superstition, he was himself de-

gradingly superstitious, and stood in mortal terror of witches. His appearance was burly and unprepossessing, and he was a tyrant and a coward to the depths of his nature.

III.

The gunpowder plot was the invention of a Catholic nobleman named Catesby. One day in the spring of 1604, he was conversing with another of his kind named Percy, a descendant of an illustrious house, on the persecutions to which those of their religion were still subjected, and Percy boldly proposed that they should at once set about effecting the assassination of King James. But Catesby informed him that he had a grander scheme in his mind.

“What good effect would result from his assassination?” Catesby inquired. “Do you not know that one of his children would immediately assume his place, and perpetuate these evils? Even if the whole royal family were swept away it would not

serve us. The nobility and the Parliament are linked in one bond ; they would raise another family to the throne, who would persecute us still, and seek revenge besides for the death of these. Percy, we must destroy not only the royal family, but the lords and the commons at one blow."

"But how is this possible?" asked Percy, eagerly.

"Listen ! The first meeting of Parliament will soon occur. There the whole number of our foes will be met together. We must take into our confidence some few staunch Catholic gentlemen like ourselves, and run a mine beneath the hall in which our enemies are assembled. Seizing upon the moment when the king is addressing the two branches of Parliament, we will explode the mine, and blow them all into a thousand fragments at the same instant—even while they may be meditating fresh persecutions against the followers of the true religion. Thus we shall make our triumph complete."

“It is a noble plan of vengeance, Catesby,” replied Percy, delighted. “I am with you, heart and hand.”

They immediately set about the selection of their fellow-conspirators, each of whom they bound to secrecy by solemn oaths, superadding thereto that most sacred of their rites, the communion service. The first whom they admitted to their confidence was Thomas Winter. Him they despatched to Flanders, to secure the services of one Guido Fawkes, an Englishman by birth, but so devout a Catholic that he could not live in England. Fawkes was at that time serving in the Spanish army which the Catholic tyrant Philip still maintained in that province of the Netherlands which had of late given him so much trouble in his efforts to do precisely what the Protestants in England were now doing—namely, to extinguish religious freedom. Fawkes entered eagerly into the plot when Winter broached it to him, and the two made haste to return to England.

The conspirators knew their man beforehand. Fawkes was a person of most forbidding aspect—lean and scowling—but one who had proved the quality of his courage in previous adventures, and whose zeal was beyond all question.

The spring and summer went by, and late in the autumn the conspirators began to put their plans into action. Percy hired a house adjoining the Parliament House, and caused a large quantity of provisions to be put into it. About Christmas, one by one the conspirators gathered, and then the house was shut up, the shutters closed and the doors fastened, to give the passers-by the impression that there was nobody within. Spades, pickaxes, etc., had also been provided, together with arms with which to defend themselves in case of a surprise. They were ready for death, if need be, and, animated by a belief that they were serving the cause of religion, were full of the highest enthusiasm. Fawkes alone remained on the watch in the upper part

of the house ; the others, seven in number, descended to the cellars to commence their labours. The wall which they had to pierce was nine feet thick, and of a masonwork so hard and old that it was almost as impregnable as solid stone. They divided into two gangs, and while one gang worked the other rested, to eat or sleep. They had in the cellar an ample store of baked meats and wine, and their enthusiasm continued unabated through the six weeks in which they picked away at the flinty wall. Gentlemen as they were, and all unused to work of this sort, they toiled like common labourers ; sweat poured from their faces, and their hands were blistered with the unwonted exertion ; yet though they scarcely rested day nor night, they made no greater progress than a foot a week. The rubbish they put in bags and carried carefully out at a back-door in the darkness of midnight, and digging deep holes in the soil of the garden, buried the contents of the bags where no eye could see.

Candlemas came—time of the church feast so dear to the Catholics, but whose celebration was at that period prohibited in England. But five days now before the time at which Parliament was to meet, and the wall scarcely more than half pierced ! Despair began to creep upon the conspirators. It seemed impossible that they should get through the wall in time ; but they laboured on.

“ Hark ! ” whispered Percy, breaking the silence in which they were pursuing their toil. He bent forward in a listening attitude, his hand raised to enjoin silence upon his companions. “ What is that noise ? ”

All listened intently. It seemed to come from the opposite side of the wall on which they were at work, but what it meant they were at a loss to know. In some trepidation, they ceased their labours, and one of their number cautiously left the house and went into the street. He found by inquiry that a coal vault underneath the House of

Lords was being emptied of its stores, the owner having resolved to sell off, and let the vault to the highest bidder. Returning to his companions, he laid this fact before them, and they immediately resolved to rent the vault for their own purpose. But, unexpectedly, Parliament was prorogued to the following October. This news was received with great joy by the conspirators, for now they would have ample time in which to perfect their arrangements.

They hired the vault, and, with great caution and at intervals, conveyed thither thirty-six barrels of gunpowder—enough to tear the building to its foundation, and leave “no stone upon another.” This formidable magazine was then covered with fagots and billets of wood, in such manner as to convey the impression that the vault contained nothing else. Guy Fawkes was placed to watch over the vault, under the pretence of being the servant of Percy, who was supposed to own all this wood. The doors were thrown open boldly, and people

allowed to enter freely if they chose, no one suspecting the fearful secret of that great honest-looking pile.

IV.

The long-awaited time at last drew near. The conspirators, secure in their preparations, gave themselves no concern as to the fatal cellar; they knew it was in the hands of a zealous dare-devil, who would not fail to fire the mine when the proper moment came. But they learned that there would be one of the royal family absent, at the opening of Parliament, namely, the young duke, whose tender years kept him away. Therefore, it was arranged that Percy should murder him, or kidnap him, simultaneously with the bursting of the mine.

But this plot, which embraced so wide a sweep of revenge, involved also the lives of some good Catholics, who, ignorant of the approaching catastrophe, would be present as spectators, or attendants on the king, or

as peers of the realm occupying seats in the house. This prospect, appalling as it was, had been softened by the specious assurances of Jesuit priests who had been admitted into the secret, and who showed the conspirators that the interests of religion demanded the sacrifice of a few innocent lives, in order that the guilty should be punished. The conspirators, who now numbered twenty, therefore determined to keep their secret inviolable, and calmly behold the destruction of their co-religionists.

Among these seemingly doomed Catholics was Lord Monteagle, a gentleman much beloved. Ten days before the expected meeting of Parliament, a person in disguise put into the hand of a servant of this lord a letter, which the servant delivered to his master. "My lord," this letter said, "out of the love I bear to some of your friends, I have a care of your preservation. Therefore, I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift off your attendance at this Parliament. For

God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of this time. And think not slightly of this advertisement : but retire yourself into your country, where you may expect the event in safety. For though there be no appearance of any stir, yet, I say, they will receive a terrible blow this Parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurts them. This counsel is not to be contemned, because it may do you good, and can do you no harm ; for the danger is past as soon as you have burned the letter. And I hope God will give you the grace to make good use of it, into whose holy protection I commend you."

Monteagle perused this singular epistle more than once, in his inability to comprehend its hidden meaning. Had he been at once a coward and a rogue, he would have taken fright at its dreadful insinuations, and silently complied with its recommendations, leaving the scheme to be carried out in all its original horror. But fortunately for those who were to have been the victims,

and fortunately for that page of history which would have been blackened by the record of this monstrous crime, he was not frightened ; he half believed the writer to be some knave who sought to hold him up to ridicule. At all events, he took the letter at once to Lord Salisbury, Secretary of State, who, in his turn, took it to the king. The result was, that it was resolved to inspect all the vaults beneath the houses of Parliament.

On the day preceding that on which Parliament was to meet, the Earl of Suffolk, then Lord Chamberlain, commenced the search, with little serious thought that he should discover anything. Nevertheless, he did his duty thoroughly. Pausing before the vault in which the barrels of gunpowder were concealed, he ran his eye over the pile of wood and fagots. Guy Fawkes, with his hat slouched over his eyes, stood in a dark corner, and the chamberlain accosted him.

“ Who are you, sirrah ? ” he asked.

“I am the servant of Master Percy, my lord,” said Fawkes.

“I like not your countenance, I promise you,” said the chamberlain. “What name do you bear?”

“My name is Johnson, my lord,” answered Fawkes.

“What doth Percy with such a quantity of fuel as this?” pursued the chamberlain. “He lives little in town. Nay, keep your answer,” and he turned away, with his suspicions fully confirmed.

That night, as the hour of twelve sounded, Sir Thomas Knevet, a justice of the peace, with several stalwart attendants, suddenly made his appearance, and seized Fawkes at the door of the vault. He made a fierce resistance, but to no purpose; he was bound and taken to prison. The wood was torn aside, and the barrels of powder found underneath. In Fawkes’ pocket were found the matches and touchwood with which he was to have fired the train leading to the mine.

Finding that all was discovered, Fawkes made no effort to shield himself from punishment, but loudly lamented that he had not had a moment's warning, so that he could have fired the powder and perished with his enemies. When brought before the council, his manner was firm, and even scornful. He had only words of regret for his failure to carry out the plot, and made no appeals for mercy. He stubbornly refused to disclose the names of the conspirators. He was told that unless he yielded, a death more horrible than that of the assassin of William of Orange should be his fate.

"I can bear it as well as he," said Fawkes.

He was threatened with the most frightful tortures.

"I will suffer a thousand deaths before I will betray my companions," was his response.

He was put in prison, loaded with chains, and left in darkness and solitude for three

days and nights, at the end of which time he was brought out for torture. His fierce spirit had been broken by his confinement, and when the dreadful rack was shown to him, he yielded, and made a full confession. His fellow-conspirators had taken flight, but were pursued, and those who were taken alive were executed. Thomas Winter was one of these; but Percy and Catesby were shot and killed while fighting, they having, together with several adherents, banded themselves together in arms and made a desperate resistance to their pursuers.

From an old and extremely rare pamphlet of thirteen leaves—"London, imprinted for Jeffrey Charlton; and to be sold at his shop at the great North dore of Powle's, 1606,"—we make the following extract, descriptive of the execution of Guy Fawkes: "Last of all came the great Devill of all, *Faulkes alias Johnson*, who should have put fire to the powder; his body being weak with torture and sickness,

he was scarce able to go up the ladder, but yet, with much ado, by the help of the hangman, went hie enough to breake his neck with the fall, who made no long speech, but after a short seeming to be sorrie for his offence, asked a kind of forgiveness of the King and the State for his bloodie intent, with his crosses and his idle ceremonies made his end upon the gallowes and the block to the great joy of the beholders."

V.

Thus perished the man who, had he been successful, would have lived in history as the most stupendous assassin the world ever knew. It by no means appears that he was of a specially bloodthirsty nature. Born among the quiet scenes of a Yorkshire rural neighbourhood, he was a Catholic of the devoutest sort, and it was through his great devotion to his religion that he became a soldier under the banner of Philip of Spain, who in his day was looked upon

as the firmest ally of the Pope. Like nearly all the assassins of history, Fawkes was a fanatic in the service of a faction; and it by no means follows that he was indeed "the great Devill of all," merely on account of his being the *hand* of the body of men whom he worked with. The burning in effigy of Fawkes, on the 5th of November in each year, was long thereafter a regular practice in England, and was formerly a legal holiday in this country, though it is no longer such. In New England, the custom was also for some years common; and there are few who are not familiar with the verses:—

"Remember, remember, the fifth of November,
The gunpowder treason and plot."

As is almost invariably the case where assassination steps in to work out certain purposes, the gunpowder plot re-acted upon its projectors; and, so far from the penal laws against Catholics being ameliorated, their rigour was increased. Even had the plot been successful, there is no reason

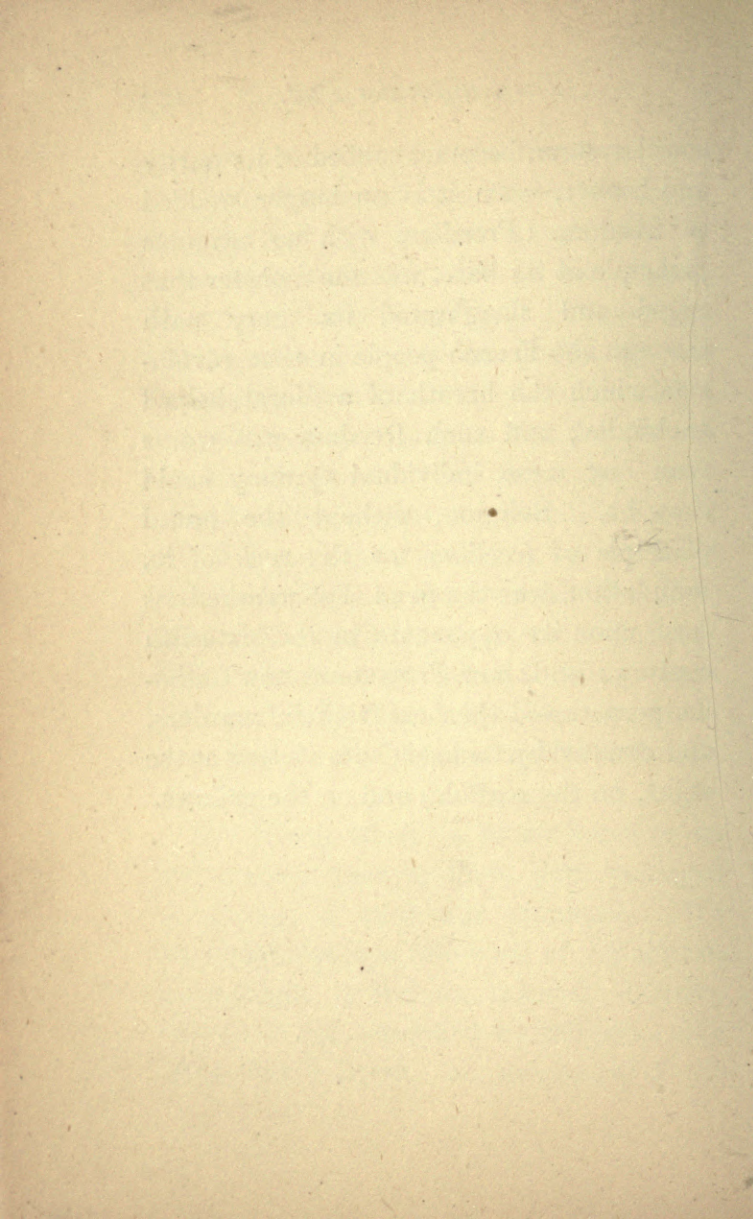
whatever to believe that it would have served the purposes of the Catholics. The Protestant people would almost inevitably have arisen in a vengeful fury, and a general massacre of Catholics throughout the kingdom would have ensued. It seems as if the actors in schemes of assassination were always completely blinded as to the true results which must follow their atrocities.

Justice will not permit us to pass by the other actors in this plot, and bestow the title of assassin on Fawkes alone of all the conspirators. Certainly to Catesby, Percy and Winter, if not to Rookwood, Digby, and others, we must in equity apply the same infamous name. They were no less fanatics, also, than Fawkes, and there had been nothing in the previous tenor of their lives to lead us to expect that such men would plunge themselves into the hideous gulf of crime. They were men of fortune, and much respected by those who knew them. Catesby, it seems, was a man of such

general excellences of character as to have attached Rookwood and Digby to him so strongly that they declared they would lay down their lives for him in any cause. Their trust in the integrity of his purposes and the soundness of his judgment was so complete that they needed no persuasion to enter into any project that he recommended to them. Of the other conspirators, similar good words could be said; and Digby, notwithstanding his Catholic belief, was high in favour with the Protestant Queen Elizabeth, so recently dead. These things only serve to show, in a stronger light, the iniquities into which men may be led by the spirit of fanaticism.

The lesson which is borne home to us with strong force by these dark passages in history, is clear and emphatic. We learn that freedom, the basis of republican institutions, is but an infernal delusion when it is not sanctified by religion. We learn that religion, the safeguard of the

social system, becomes robbed of its purity and beauty, when it is no longer wedded to freedom. Freedom, with no religious principle at its base, was the monster that raged and slaughtered its gory path through the French people in that revolution which the breath of a Marat helped to kindle; and such freedom was worse than any mere individual tyranny could ever be. Religion, without the grand principle of freedom for the rock of its foundation, was the fiend that wreaked its fury upon its opponents in the sixteenth century; and, now Protestant, now Catholic, perpetrated the most frightful murders, and counted by thousands its victims at the stake, on the scaffold, and on the gallows.



IV.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

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LIBRARY OF THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

I.

It was the afternoon of the 9th of August, 1792. In a cellar in the old Rue des Cordeliers, in Paris (the street now known as the Rue de l'École de Médecine), standing by a barrel covered with manuscripts, a newspaper editor was writing. He was a man of a most repulsive aspect, gaunt and bony in frame, with a mottled and unhealthy skin, which seemed, by its hue, to typify the bloodthirsty nature of the soul that dwelt within that ugly body. His eyes, black and bloodshot, glowed fitfully beneath a brow on which the stamp of a feverish ambition was set as with a brand of fire. His mouth, with thin and livid

lips, wore an habitual sneer, and seemed to indicate a being devoid of every tender emotion. The general aspect of his countenance was such as would have impressed the beholder with a sense of great strength, of indomitable will, unflinching purpose, and intellectual force of the most remarkable type. It was the face of a man who had cultivated his intellect, and crushed his heart to death ; at the same time his frame indicated the ruin of his physical system, through the same harsh process.

This man wore a dirty cloth bound round his head, partially covering his black and uncombed hair from sight. His clothing was slovenly to the last degree, and dirt was the prevailing feature of his dress. He wore heavy shoes, with nails in the soles, after the manner of the peasantry of France, and instead of the buckles worn at that time by the class of men with whom he associated, his shoes were tied with bits of string. His trousers were of coarse and common stuff, and thick with grease and

dirt, as was the workman's blouse that hung from his thin shoulders. His shirt was thrown open at the neck; he wore neither collar nor cravat. In every way, his costume was in the most striking contrast to the studied elegance of that period. His hands were thick, short, and always dirty; his nails untrimmed, but gnawed off by their owner's teeth, with the action of a wild beast.

The cellar was feebly lighted by one small aperture only. It was under the old convent of the Cordeliers, and was inaccessible to all save those who were in the secret of this man's hiding-place. He listened to the rumbling of wheels in the street without, pausing in his work from time to time, and laying down his pen. As the rumbling would die away in the distance, he would shake his head despairingly, and resume his writing. Again he would leave his place by the barrel, and rush, rather than walk, about his dark cage, with the action of a maniac, muttering be-

tween his set teeth, and gesticulating fiercely with his naked arms, from which the sleeves were up-rolled. As night came on his agitation seemed to increase. His hand so trembled in attempting to light the miserable candle that it was with difficulty he accomplished his object.

Presently there came three distinct raps on the door of the cellar. The haggard face looked up, and appeared to listen doubtfully. Then the voice of a woman was heard, saying, "Open, monsieur—it is I." He unbarred the door then, and admitted a young girl, with a basket on her arm. She brought him his supper—some rice, dried fruits, and a bottle of coffee—his unvarying diet. He eagerly asked this girl the news. She replied that Paris still remained quiet. A gesture of despair was the man's response to this intelligence. "Our cause is lost," said he; "we have nothing to do but to leave this doomed city. Since the people are determined to be slaves, slaves let them be!"

He paced the cellar again, stamping the ground in anger, his face distorted with the violence of his emotions ; and thus continued to walk, with furious imprecations, or to seat himself at his barrel and dash off in a frenzy the thoughts which surged in his heaving breast. As the hour of midnight came, the solitary boom of a single cannon rung over Paris, and penetrated the journalist's cellar. He rose to his feet with a cry of joy, and clasped his hands on his quick-beating heart. Then bells began to ring. The tocsin sounded. The reverberations of a thousand brazen tongues resounded over the city. All night long the tumult continued ; all night long the excited journalist paced the gloomy limits of his cellar, or seated at his barrel penned the fiery words which the following day should be scattered all over Paris, through the columns of his paper, *The Friend of the People*.

The reader of history needs not to be informed that this physically repulsive but

intellectually powerful man was Jean Paul Marat, the Diogenes of the French Revolution—a man utterly unselfish, but utterly brutal—a man whose honesty in his convictions was, beyond doubt, as perfect as his modes of serving those convictions were monstrous.

Marat was not a Frenchman. He was born at Bondry, in Neufchatel, Switzerland, and came to Paris when a young man. Here he studied medicine, and published various scientific works. He was practising his profession (in the somewhat inferior capacity of a veterinary surgeon, it is said), at the beginning of those disturbing movements which inaugurated the French Revolution. His first appearance as one of the revolutionist haranguers was received with ridicule and contempt. When he attempted to speak in the streets, the crowd, instead of listening to the voice of the hideous little horse-doctor, would elbow and jostle him, laughing coarsely at his frantic gestures, and treading with their hob-nailed

shoes upon his toes. But he was not to be discouraged; and as the tide of events and opinions was setting strongly in the direction that he favoured, he speedily became a recognized leader, and the editor of that sheet which wielded such a potent influence throughout so many bloody years, *L'Ami du Peuple*. So bold and startling were the utterances of this journal—so bloodthirsty its demands—so bitter its venom against royalty and aristocracy—that the government soon became seriously alarmed, and Marat was in danger of losing his liberty if not his life. The police of Paris endeavoured to secure him, but through the aid of some of his fellow-revolutionists, he escaped the vigilance of the authorities, and found a refuge in various low and obscure quarters, from which he continued to put forth his incendiary sheet. Numerous efforts were made to suppress it, and to bring Marat to punishment; but they were in vain. The revolutionists were

already in too great numbers ; and though Marat was hunted like a wild beast from retreat to retreat, from kennel to kennel, from cellar to cellar, he succeeded in avoiding his pursuers, and in uninterruptedly publishing his paper. The cellar under the old convent of the Cordeliers finally became his secure refuge, and here he remained closely shut up, or going abroad only at night, carefully disguised, and watched over by his friends, until the moment at which I have introduced him to my reader.

While Marat waits in his cellar, and listens eagerly to the details of the events of that terrible 10th of August, as they are brought to him hour by hour by his trusty messenger—the girl we have already seen—let us go out into the streets of Paris, and see for ourselves what is transpiring. And as we view these scenes, and reflect upon the fact that they were brought about, more than by any other one thing, by the tireless energy of this man,

Marat, we may conceive the exultation that filled his brutal breast, as he recognized his triumphant work. Although he was not as yet the recognized leader of the revolutionists, he was the "power behind the throne," and wielded a mightier influence than Danton himself, through that engine of power for good or guile—the Press. The day came when his star was brighter, his place in the breasts of the people more firm, his share in their enthusiastic devotion greater, than that of any other member of the terrible Committee of Five—Robespierre, Danton, Saint Just, Camille Desmoulins, Marat.

The revolutionists were at this time best known by the title of Jacobins—a name derived from their place of meeting, in the church of a suppressed Jacobin monastery. The Jacobins were divided into two factions—the Girondists and the Cordeliers. The Girondists, while seeking the establishment of a republic, were still the friends of the king and his family. The Cordeliers on

the contrary entertained the most bitter hatred for the king, and sought his destruction. Of course Marat was of this latter party, as were Robespierre, Danton, etc. The Cordeliers, through Marat's influence upon the people in his paper, and other influences, had obtained the ascendancy, and drawn after them the mob. They now clamoured for the overthrow of the throne. The insurrection of the 10th of August was the result, and had been carefully planned by Marat and his companions. The palace of the Tuileries, where the king resided, was to be marched on, and Louis and his family seized. Information of the plot had been conveyed to the king, and such provisions made for defence as could be made. The palace was surrounded by soldiers, to receive the battle of the people. Here the king awaited the coming of the morning, even as Marat was awaiting it in his gloomy cellar—but with what different emotions! The palace was but the prison of Louis now; it was incapable

of resisting a siege : it had no ramparts ; nor could Louis escape from it. With his family, he awaited the result of the rising of the infuriate populace.

II.

The rising sun showed the surging sea of humanity that swelled and roared about the palace. It had been clamouring all night long—while above its tumult sounded the tocsin (the royal alarm-bell) hour on hour. Throughout the streets of Paris, the people were moving. They had no employment on this day but the overthrow of royalty. The battalions of the faubourg, armed with sabres and bayonets, presented an appearance of a somewhat martial character. Those who followed were more terrible in aspect. Their faces glowed with fury. They marched in the wildest apparent disorder, with shouts and brandishing of arms at the houses of suspected aristocrats. Their arms were

of every description of tool and utensil known to labouring men—pikes and cutlasses, hammers and axes, the carpenter's saw, the shoemaker's knife, the pavior's lever, crowbars, clubs, and every conceivable weapon capable of inflicting a wound. Men, women and children, dirty and ragged, mingled indiscriminately in the surging mass, and united with frantic voices in chanting the *Ça Ira*, "the Marseillaise of assassins." Women of ill-fame, the scourgings of the vilest quarters, marched in soiled silken dresses, with brazen foreheads and libidinous tongues, by the side of beggarly hags, leading little ones at their side, with emaciated cheeks and hollow eyes—a confused and squalid mass—pouring in from every quarter of the city—surging like the waves of a living ocean toward the palace where their king and queen awaited their onset. This was the hydra-headed fiend that Marat had evoked. It marched toward the palace of the Tuileries.

The first demand of the people for admission to the palace was answered by the open departure of the king and family to the assembly, leaving the palace still surrounded by the Swiss guard, the national guard, and the royalist gentlemen. These gentlemen viewed the king's departure with consternation ; this was the reward of their fealty ! Some of them snapped their swords in two, and tore the cross of honour from their breasts, in their shame and indignation. While the king was gone, the populace and the guard about the palace came in collision ; and the horrors of the 10th of August set in. From that hour forward, the most dreadful tumult reigned. Blood flowed in torrents. The guard were overpowered and killed after a varying struggle, and then the living sea poured into the palace and spread its roaring waves through every apartment. The rabble, pitiless, bloodthirsty, revengeful, assassinated all they met—servants, pages, priests, librarians, no matter what their

office in the palace. They tore up the floors, broke the furniture and works of art, tossed beautiful things out of the windows, mutilating and destroying in rage and hate. They sought only blood—and held up their hands to show their emptiness, while they showed them also red with gore. Some, who undertook to steal, were hung on the spot. For three hours, the bloody hunt continued, till every human being was destroyed. In vain the affrighted royalists sought to hide in cellars and subterranean passages—upon the roofs of houses or under heaps of forage in the stables—they were sought out with cries of derision, and their blood spirted upon the floors and walls, till every angle of the scene dripped blood like tears. When all was over, and the streets resounded with the cries of victory, Marat came forth from his cellar. He was hailed with shouts of acclamation, a sabre was put in his hand, a crown of laurels on his head, and, elevated upon the shoulders of half-a-dozen men, he was

borne through the streets to the royal printing-house, where he seized upon the presses as his own especial spoil.

III.

It does not fall within the scope of this paper, to follow the fortunes of the royal family. I only aim to give such passages in the history of that dreadful time, as will enable the reader to perceive the guiltiness of Marat, the future victim of assassination. More than any one other man was he responsible for the horrors of the 10th of August; more than any one other man, also, for the frightful massacres of September following. The idea was his, although the acceptance and responsibility belonged to others. It was an idea as sublime as it was horrible, by which he aimed to sweep out of life at one monstrous blow all those people, of royalist inclinations, whom he deemed dangerous to the prosperity of the future republic—to purge Paris, as the

centre of France, of all its anti-democratic elements, so that he might reconstruct society on the plan that his insane and furious brain had conceived to be necessary.

Many deem the September massacres to have been an unpremeditated outburst of the popular frenzy. Few things can be more certain in history, than that this idea is a fallacy. The evidences of studious preparation for this horrible event, are clear and overwhelming. I need not discuss them. He who studies carefully the history of this period will discover them for himself.

The preparations being completed days beforehand, the very grave of the victims being marked and paid for, (the grave being a circular spot, some six feet in diameter, in the parish of St. Jacques du Haut Pas, beneath which was an opening leading into those subterranean abysses which had formerly served as catacombs for Paris), the drama was opened. The

city was surrounded completely by a guard which prevented the escape of any inhabitant, and then the houses were searched, one by one, and all persons suspected of royalism were torn from their homes, and conveyed to prison. The unfortunate wretches, perceiving their approaching doom, had hid themselves in cellars, crept into chimneys, under planks in floors, behind pictures or tapestry where holes had been dug in the wall; they had even lain down in beds in hospitals, by the side of the sick and dying, and feigned to be sufferers there; but no stratagems availed—the plans were too carefully laid. Five thousand persons were shut up in one night, in the several prisons of Paris, and in various convents and old buildings put on this occasion to the use of prisons. Those who were found, on the following day, to have been erroneously confounded with the aristocrats, were set free. The prisons were still full of victims; and now that they were here shut up, unarmed, defence-

less, the hired assassins of Marat and Danton proceeded to kill them as butchers slaughter animals.

I can present but a general view of the dreadful work of this day and the days following. A semblance of judicial procedure was at some prisons endeavoured to be given to the work of massacre, by the provision of a board of judges, to decide upon the guilt of the prisoners. These men were athletic villains of gloomy aspect, wearing woollen caps, blouses, hobnailed shoes and butchers' aprons, some with their shirt-sleeves rolled up, their bare arms tattooed with ink. Seated about a table, whereon were glasses, bottles, pipes, pistols and sabres, they mocked the idea of justice by their very aspect. None of the prisoners came before them. The assassins, bare-armed, fierce and bloody, pursued their work with the gusto of fiends. The corpses were thrown into tumbrils and carted away. The bodies accumulated so rapidly that they were piled in heaps at the sides of the

courts. An old man, pierced by five pikes, stripped and left for dead, arose in his nakedness and ran about bleeding till he fell writhing in agony. The people, drinking gunpowder mixed in brandy, practised the most horrible tortures. Thrusting a pike through a man's body, they compelled him to walk on his knees amid their laughter. A beautiful girl, La Belle Bouquetière, was stripped naked and tied to a post with her legs thrust apart; bundles of straw were burned between her feet, her breasts were cut off with swords, red-hot pikes were thrust into her flesh, and her shrieks were drowned by the laughter of her executioners—fifty women, at whose head was Théroigne de Méricourt, a prostitute, long one of the idols of the revolution. The lovely and innocent widow Madame de Lamballe, a friend and companion of the queen, was hewn to death with sabres and pikes, her head cut off, her form stripped and insulted. At night, the murderers, pausing from their labours, sat

down carelessly upon the dead bodies to eat the food brought them by wives or sisters, while torches threw their glare about. They smoked their pipes afterward, their feet sunk in pools of blood. "See the heart of an aristocrat!" one cried, as he cut open a corpse, and tearing out the heart, squeezed some of its blood into a glass, and drank it. Troops of children, become familiarized with death, played with the decapitated heads, the severed trunks, and danced in the red pools of gore. The tumbrils, rolling onward with their heaps of dead, leaving a track of blood behind, displayed women and children seated on the corpses, laughing, bandying coarse jests, and holding up pieces of human flesh, dripping blood. Three days and three nights the horrible dream continued, and only ended when every prison was empty. Not one was left. How many were destroyed in all, God alone knows. Men say from two or three thousand to ten thousand.

IV.

The Republic of France was now ushered into being, with Marat as one of its principal leaders. He continued to publish his paper, and to clamour for blood. The September massacres seemed neither to have satiated his thirst nor to have accomplished anything toward insuring the safety of the new government from its foes. The two factions of the Jacobins now struggled for the supremacy, but the Girondists were able to accomplish little. They endeavoured to procure the expulsion of Marat from the Assembly, but in vain; and a long and fierce contest for the mastery ended in the overthrow of the Girondists, who were forced to fly from Paris, to avoid the fate which Marat contrived to provide for all who arrayed themselves against him. He had become the idol of the multitude. His degraded aspect and coarse dress, by which

he placed himself on a level with the masses; his feeble health, contracted, as the people thought, by his confinement in the cellar where he worked; the poverty of his mode of living, and his fierce daring, that feared no foe; all these conspired to throw about him that mysterious halo which the lower classes revered. When he arose to speak in the Assembly, none dared to raise their voices till he retired—not even Danton, or Robespierre. A storm of hisses assailed whoever ventured to assail Marat. He was the autocrat of the hour. The wave of his hand brought any head to the guillotine. Louis XVI. was one of his earliest victims; and the indignation of the Girondists was speedily followed by their fall. This party took up its headquarters in the old city of Caen, the capital of Normandy, and organized an insurrection against the government of which Marat was now the virtual head.

In this old city of Caen, on one of its most populous streets, there stood an

ancient building, grey with years, in front of which was a courtyard, where a moss-covered stone fountain plashed its cool waters in the sunlight. On a pleasant day, in the summer of 1793, the passer by this old mansion might have seen, seated by the brink of the mossy fountain, a young and remarkably beautiful woman, reading. She was of somewhat large but exquisitely proportioned figure, with wide breast, long, muscular arms, and tapering fingers. Her hair was of a brown so deep that it seemed black, and it curled in luxuriant masses about a face whose expression gave to the careful observer the evidences of a man's strong will. Her eyes were blue, but in thoughtful or excited moments they seemed almost black, like her hair. Her eyelashes were long; her nose slightly curving in profile; her mouth gentle, with red and sensuous lips; her chin projecting, divided by a deep dimple, and indicating a strength of passion beyond the common order. Her dress was always simple, but in the fashion

of women of rank at that period. This was Charlotte Corday, of Armont—of noble blood, but born in a humble Normandy cottage—the granddaughter of Corneille, the French poet—the Nemesis of Marat.

Charlotte revered the principles of the Girondists, and burned to avenge them and to aid their cause. We need look no further than this for her motive in sacrificing her life by ridding France of Marat. Like all who seek to serve the cause they love by wielding the assassin's knife, she reasoned falsely, in supposing that the deed of murder would accomplish good; but that this was her sole motive is plain enough. The story about a lover who owed his death to Marat, and whom she sought to avenge, is not well founded. She was a woman with no such attachment, and it is worthy of mention that Charlotte Corday bore a certain resemblance to Marat himself, in this—she had cultivated her mind at the expense of her heart. She was not the type of woman that true men

most admire. I grant her personal beauty ; but history points us to many women, of the greatest loveliness of form and feature, who dyed their hands in blood. Her virtue also must be granted ; her nobility of sentiment ; her marvellous heroism ; all these awaken our admiration, while they excite our grief that they should have been thus worse than wasted. I cannot even look upon her as typifying liberty or justice in any true sense ; she was but a factionist and a fanatic. Wilkes Booth was no less personally beautiful as a man than Charlotte Corday was as a woman. Like her he believed he served his faction, and rid his country of a tyrant. Here the comparison must end. Charlotte was brave, in the truest sense, and laid no plans for saving her own life ; Booth, on the contrary, displayed all a common murderer's solicitude for his own escape. Charlotte had no confidante—alone she formed her terrible resolution—alone she executed it—no human being dreamed that she contem-

plated the deed; Booth, it is most probable, was but the tool of others—confidantes and accomplices we know he had. Charlotte killed a moral monster, who had earned his title to a thousand deaths; Booth killed a pure and good man, whose whole life was one of the most remarkable and signal benevolence and gentleness. Charlotte was virtue's self—her maidenhood as pure as a vestal's; Booth a victim of dissipation. Charlotte died a death so sublime that we cannot, even at this distance, repress our admiration and our wonder; Booth died the death of a dog—the death of a rat, shot down in a barn where he sought to hide. The justice of these comparisons, the reader who is familiar with Booth's case may perceive for himself; but, in spite of them all, Charlotte Corday can only meet with the execration of that posterity before which she set an example so dangerous and so baleful.

The Girondists, gathered together in Caen, held meetings and issued addresses

in their efforts to recruit soldiers to march into Paris and arrest the progress of the Jacobins toward the reign of terror, now fast approaching. Charlotte Corday frequently attended these meetings, in company with her friends. Americans, who have the remembrance of thousands of such enthusiastic gatherings to quicken appreciation, easily comprehend with what effect the fire of the hour fell upon the powder of this young woman's heart, long preparing for this time to come. When she witnessed the departure of the Girondist volunteers from Caen, on their way to victory or death in behalf of their imperilled country, she felt that the time was come for her to do her work—to go to Paris, to seek out the monster Marat, and striking her dagger in his breast, strike the Jacobins with terror at the same blow, and thus save the lives of the Girondist soldiers by anticipating their work. It is worthy of mention here, that at this time the belief was general that Marat had written lists

of proscription and decided on the death of 2500 suspected men in Lyons, 3000 in Marseilles, 28,000 in Paris, and 800,000 in Brittany and Calvados. "With my one life," she thought, "I can save all these lives."

V.

On the 7th of July, Charlotte Corday set out for Argentan, where her father and sister lived, and whom she went to bid farewell. She told them she was going to England, to escape the horrors of the time, and sought her father's blessing, which he gave. On the 8th she returned to Caen, and bade adieu to the aunt with whom she had her home, telling her the same story she had told her father. On the 9th she set out for Paris in the diligence. On leaving her home she met in the street a little boy who had been a favourite with her. She gave him a small present, and said to him, "Be a good boy, Robert; and kiss me good-bye; you will never see me

again." In the diligence on the road to Paris, she charmed her fellow-travellers by the cheerfulness and gaiety of her conversation. They were Jacobins, fleeing to Paris for safety, and were loud in their praises of their idol, Marat. But Charlotte was unmoved. On the second day of the ride, one of the travellers, a young man, was so captivated by the graces of her manner that he offered her his hand in marriage. She promised the young man that he should know what her answer was, soon after their arrival in Paris.

On Thursday, July 11th, at noon, she reached Paris, and going to a hotel there, retired to bed at five o'clock and slept till the next morning. The day of the 12th was spent by Charlotte in endeavouring to ascertain the necessary particulars about Marat. It was her intention to have assaulted him in the Convention, in the presence of his fellow-Jacobins, believing that she would be at that moment assailed and torn in pieces, leaving no trace by which

she could be identified, and her relatives thrown into distress through her act ; but she found that Marat no longer appeared at the Convention, and she must seek him elsewhere.

It is a curious illustration of the power of fanaticism to know, as we do reliably, that the necessity for practising dissimulation in order to accomplish her end, shocked the virtue of this young woman more than the deed itself. Here was a girl whose whole purpose was *murder*, yet who blushed with shame at the necessity of abusing her victim's confidence with a *lie* ! She had felt similar compunctions of conscience when she deceived her father as to her destination, yet in that case humanity threw its veil over the falsehood, and it lost its base quality in its kindness of intention.

In the Rue des Cordeliers, near the head of the street, stood the miserable building in which Marat resided. He occupied only one floor of this building, reachable by one flight of stairs, and embracing an ante-

chamber, a writing-room, a bath-room, a bedroom, and a dining-room. The furniture was of the most beggarly description, and the limited apartments were used also as a place for folding and addressing his pamphlets and newspapers, which lay about on chairs and tables, damp from the press. Women and boys were constantly busy in these apartments, folding and mailing the printed matter, and the place was one of no little confusion, from the constant running in and out of these persons. A woman named Catharine Evrard, who lived with Marat as his mistress, conducted the management of his household affairs. Marat, at this time nearly consumed by a leprous disease of the blood, spent all his time alternately in his bed and in his bath, and continued to write incessantly, notwithstanding his inability to stand erect. From this squalid abode he ruled the destinies of a great people, and sent forth the mandates that brought many a manly and many a lovely head to the guillotine.

On the morning of the 12th Marat received and read a note from Charlotte Corday. "I am just from Caen, and presume that your love of country will cause you to take pleasure in hearing of the events transpiring in that section. I shall present myself at about one o'clock at your residence; have the goodness to admit me, that I may hold a moment's conversation with you. I will put you in a position to be of great service to France." It appears that this note was unheeded, and the writer was refused admission to the house when she came at the appointed time. A second note, more pressing, was brought to Marat. "I wrote you this morning, Marat," it said: "had you my letter? I cannot believe it, since I am refused admittance to you. I hope that to-morrow you will grant me this interview which I ask. I repeat, I am just from Caen, and have secrets for your ear, which are important to the safety of the republic. Besides, I am persecuted for the cause of liberty. I am unhappy,

and that I am so should give me some claim upon your patriotism." The same day, soon after seven p.m. (for it seems Charlotte was too impatient to wait till the morrow), Marat was in his bath when there came a knock at the outer door. The bath-room was dimly lighted. Across the bath, before Marat's naked breast, there lay a board strewn with manuscripts. Marat was writing. He dipped his pen into a heavy leaden inkstand which stood upon a block of wood by the side of the bath. The letter he was engaged upon was a demand for the proscription of the last Bourbons tolerated in France. A dirty, ink-stained cloth lay over the bath in such a manner as to hide all of his person except his head, the upper part of his breast, and his naked right arm. The inevitable dirty cloth was wrapped about his matted hair, and his great mouth, delirious eyes, high cheek-bones, and withered person rendered him by no means an attractive spectacle. He heard, from his place, the conversation be-

tween the women at the door. His mistress seemed disposed to prevent the entrance of the stranger, when Marat, in a loud and imperative voice shouted, "Admit the woman!" His order was obeyed, but with much grumbling and ill-will, born either of jealousy or distrust.

A moment after, Marat, looking up, beheld a beautiful girl enter his bath-room. She was dressed in a white robe, with a silk scarf over her shoulders, crossed on her breast, and fastened behind. A jaunty Normandy cap, with its long lace, sat upon her head, and her hair fell in unrestricted luxuriance down her back. About her brow was a wide green ribbon, fastening her cap in its place. Her face wore the ruddy hue of health—her gaze was serene and undisturbed—her voice, when she spoke, was calm and musical. With downcast eyes and pendent arms she stood close to the side of the bath. Marat inquired concerning the state of Normandy, and asked the names of the deputies in refuge

at Caen. One by one she named their names; one by one he wrote them down; and then folding the paper, said, in bitter tones, "Very good! Before a week is gone, every man of them shall die by the guillotine!"

The sound of this dreadful word seemed to be the signal for which Charlotte Corday's soul waited. She produced from her bosom a poniard knife with an ebony haft, and struck it into the monster's heart, quite to the hilt. Then she drew forth the weapon, dripping with blood, and dropped it upon the floor.

Marat uttered a single cry for help, and was dead. The door had been left ajar, and Marat's mistress, a maid-servant, and a man named Laurent Basse rushed in. Charlotte stood behind a curtain where she had retired, calm and motionless, with the outline of her figure fully exposed. They knocked her down with a chair, and trampled her under their feet in their rage. A crowd of people rushed in from the street—among them some soldiers and national

guards. Charlotte arose to her feet, and was seized by the soldiers, who twisted her arms behind her, and held her till cords were brought to bind her with. Such was the fury of the crowd that it was with difficulty the soldiers with their bayonets prevented her being torn to pieces on the spot. "Poor people," said Charlotte, "you wish my death; you owe me an altar for freeing you from a monster." She afterward asked to be thrown to the infuriate mob, who would assuredly have rent her to fragments in their rage. It was only by the greatest care, and surrounding the carriage with a strong guard of soldiery, that they succeeded in conveying Charlotte to the Abbaye prison, which was near by.

VI.

Charlotte's trial and condemnation to death followed speedily. Efforts were made to induce her to disclose her accomplices, but it was evident to the commonest

comprehension that her answers, in which she denied that any being other than herself knew of her purpose, were entirely sincere. It was something to the credit of these bloody times, that Charlotte was put to no such torture as that which the Netherlands inflicted on the fanatic who assassinated the good William of Orange ; but there were more reasons than one for this forbearance—the chief of them being, in my opinion, that those who conducted her examination felt no real grief for the death of Marat, whom they had no doubt more feared than loved. It was only the cajoled and deluded masses who wept over his death.

The day of the execution came. Charlotte's beautiful long hair was cut off in prison, and she was arrayed in the red *chemise des condamnés*, reaching from her neck to her feet. With her hands firmly bound behind her, she mounted the fatal cart that was to bear her to the guillotine. At that moment a violent thunderstorm

broke over the city, and as she was driven bareheaded through the streets the rain wetted her to the skin, and her red *chemise*, clinging to her form, displayed its virgin symmetry to the rude gaze of the rabble which blocked the streets as the fatal cart passed on, and hooted fiercely at her. Among the loudest and foulest of her imprecators were hordes of furious women, who seemed to seek in vain for words vile enough and bitter enough to express their hate. But Charlotte looked upon the crowd with serene and pitying eyes.

Up to the moment when she stood in the presence of the dreadful guillotine, Charlotte Corday had not once shown in her face any emotion of fear or horror. But as she looked upon the glittering blade beneath which she was now to place her neck, the beautiful young assassin turned pale. It was but momentary, however. She ascended the scaffold with a light and unhesitating step, though her long *chemise* and pinioned arms somewhat inconvenienced her. She

placed herself under the heavy blade ; it glided down its noiseless grooves, and the fair young head rolled upon the scaffold. A brutal assistant, one Legros by name, took the blood-dripping head in his hand, and slapped its cheek with his coarse palm.

Thus ended the assassin. While we admire her heroism, while we grieve for her sacrificed youth and beauty, we can have no words but those of condemnation the most unqualified, for her deed. It was not only criminal, unwomanly, it was useless, and worse than useless. It sealed the fate of all the Girondists ; from that day they were doomed to extirpation. Beyond question the purest party known to the French revolution, it lacked the intellect and force that made the Jacobins so powerful. It had no Marat, no Robespierre, even no Camille Desmoulins. Its brightest lights were two women—Madame Roland and Charlotte Corday.

The people made an idol of the memory of Marat. Flowers strewed his way to the

tomb, and virgins chanted requiems about his funeral car. His portrait was set up as an object of adoration in one of the principal churches, over the altar. This last feature, however, has less significance in view of the fact, which the reader should not be allowed to forget, that the churches were no longer places for the worship of the Most High. The corrupt basis of the French Revolution, which abolished the religion of Christianity, and scoffed at morality—this, perhaps more than any other one fact, made this struggle for independence futile, and marked its progress with blood and horror. Liberty, when it puts its foot upon the neck of prostrate religion, invites pandemonium.

V.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

I.

It was high noon in Washington, the capital of the United States of America, on the 4th of March, 1865. The morning of this day had been fierce with storm, but just before the hour arrived in which Abraham Lincoln was to be inaugurated President of the United States for a second four-years' term, the sunlight broke forth in all its glory. It shone over a picturesque and striking scene. The tall and meagre form of the Illinois backwoodsman stood up against the imposing background of the National Capitol, to utter once more that eloquence which was his peculiar gift. Beyond all Presidents who ever

occupied the American Chair of State, this self-educated man was endowed with the tongue of silver. With his serene and steadfast eye resting upon the vast crowd of upturned faces in the sunshine, listening to sentences which were to go down to future ages as among the most impressive utterances of human purpose the world has known, the President said: "With malice toward none, with charity to all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

Quick on the echo of these musical words, peace between the Northern and Southern warriors came. The internecine struggle which for four bloody and ever-memorable years had covered the Southern States with ruin and the whole United

States with woe—the mistaken effort of a blindly misguided people to destroy the most beneficent government of modern times—came to an end on the 9th day of April, but little more than a month after the utterance of the above-quoted words by the newly installed President. The Southern General, Robert E. Lee, on that 9th day of April, surrendered his sword to the Northern General, Ulysses S. Grant, the most formidable chieftain in battle and the most magnanimous conqueror in the hour of triumph known to modern history. The war was ended. The great heart of the country heaved a vast sigh of relief and gladness, believing its night of sorrow was ended, and that its tears might be dried with the new-born day. But the most tear-compelling event of the whole four years was about to be enacted, and to cover the land with an agony of mourning.

On the evening of Friday, the 14th of April, the fifth day of the peace, President Lincoln went with his wife and a few

friends to the theatre. It had been announced that he would go, and that General Grant also would go, but General Grant was called from town, and the President, to save the people from full disappointment, felt that he at least should give his presence. He occupied the principal box of Ford's Theatre, and was seated in a rocking-chair, which had been placed there for him, with all the cares of state thrown from his mind for the moment, laughing like a school-boy at the comical banalities of "Our American Cousin." Suddenly a pistol-shot was heard; the wild excited figure of a dark-haired, handsome young man, fashionably dressed, flashed through the box and leaped to the stage below; a tragic voice exclaimed, "*Sic semper tyrannis!* The South is avenged!" and the figure disappeared behind the scenes of the theatre.

The President had been shot by a pistol held close to his head. His eyes closed, his face paled, his head fell forward on his

breast, and his life was ended. They raised him up and bore him to a house across the way, but he was unconscious for ever. He ceased to breathe at a little after seven on the morning of the next day. The house to which he was borne was a common respectable "furnished-lodgings" house, where actors playing at the theatre sometimes had apartments, and the room in which he expired was a back-room on the ground floor. This room was at the time tenanted by a simple-hearted actor named Matthews, a friend of Wilkes Booth, the assassin of the President, who was in the habit of frequenting the house to chat with his brother-actor; and Booth had actually lain on the very bed where the Martyr President expired. Such a coincidence could hardly have been possible in any land but a democratic one like the United States.

II.

Abraham Lincoln had often been warned against the danger of assassination. To heed these warnings was, however, a thing impossible to him—first, because he could not believe in the verity of such a danger to himself—second, because it is out of the question to throw the shield of protection around an American President, accessible to everybody as he is and must ever be. But a great conspiracy had long been hatching. A plot whose incipient steps were taken long before, under circumstances and with purposes widely different from those which now existed, came forth in this hour and wrought its woe. The original conspiracy was merely a plot for the abduction of the president, but as time went on and the scheme grew in likelihood of execution it grew also in dimensions and audacity. At last it aimed at no smaller result than the assassination of all the most prominent officials of the govern-

ment, and General Grant besides. Of the nine persons who are known to have been concerned with Wilkes Booth, directly or indirectly, in the plot, four were hung (one of these a woman) three sentenced to hard labour for life on the Dry Tortugas, and one for six years.

That the Confederate government had anything to do with this truly hellish scheme, no one for a moment supposes. It was the hare-brain enterprise of fools and madmen.

Wilkes Booth was pursued into Maryland and Virginia. He had broken his leg in springing from the box to the stage in the theatre, but a horse had been provided for him, and he had got away. In Maryland a doctor had set his broken leg, and then he had resumed his flight, accompanied by what dark phantoms of terror none can ever know. When he was overtaken by the pursuing party he had hidden himself in a farmer's barn near Bowling Green, Va.; and there, refusing to

give himself up, he was shot to death among the littering straw.

Some comparisons have been made, in the preceding pages, between Booth and other noted assassins. He was not probably the greatest criminal of the conspiring nine; but his vanity was colossal. Through this vanity, in my opinion, he was wrought upon to the horrible end he reached. By the accident of a strolling life which caused his parents to be sojourning in the South when he was born, Wilkes Booth was a Southerner. Of this fact he was proud, as all Southerners are, with reason or without. His sympathies were with the South in the war, and his associations were with those who, sharing that sympathy, flattered his vanity and made it seem to him that his bold and bloody act would make him live in history for evermore as a grandly heroic personage. He was a weak man,—in no sense a strong character—and his vices were those of a weak nature, of which vanity is chief.

Stronger minds could sway him easily to their will. In appearance he was romantic and striking, and his profession was that of one who interprets noble and romantic characters ; but a more emphatically commonplace person in himself than Wilkes Booth I never chanced to meet. As an actor, though his aspect was picturesque, his talent was mediocre. My memory has always persisted in recalling him in the shape in which I last beheld him, a few months before the assassination : standing up at the public bar of a drinking-saloon, through whose wide-open doors any passer-by in the street could see him, drinking a glass of toddy with the spoon against his cheek. It is charitable to believe that his mind was touched by insanity, if only by the transient insanity of drink, when he committed the deed which has stained with infamy a name made honourable by others of his race. For the sake of these others, living and dead, comment is content to

pass briefly by the dramatic maniac who slew Abraham Lincoln.

III.

No pen has power to paint the sorrow of the American people under the dreadful calamity which had thus befallen them. No words could possibly exaggerate the boundless grief of the whole loyal people for Lincoln's loss. As in the case of William of Orange, the little children cried in the streets. But strong men also cried, and bitterly, and in the streets as well. Tears rolled down their cheeks as they met and pressed each other's hands in silence. No man needed to tell another of the news; nothing else was thought of, for days together. The funeral cortége, as it passed from town to town, bearing the dead President to his last repose, over the same route he had living traversed when he first came from his western home to assume the dignity of the Chief Magistracy—as it

rested in state at Baltimore, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, Chicago, and finally at Springfield—converted whole States into scenes of widespread mourning. The lines of railway were hung literally in black; the rushing train passed through an ever-recurring succession of vast and tearful crowds. The tale of the hour in one of the large towns above-named is the tale of all. In New York, the scene was the grandest, most solemn, most impressive exhibition of popular sentiment that it was ever my lot in life to witness; and I never expect to behold such a scene again. It was a day to be remembered by all who lived, and to be related to the children of a future generation, by the grandsires of coming years. The very poorest people—people with whom life is one long struggle for daily bread—almost without an exception displayed their humble sign of participation in the all-prevailing grief. If the observer occasionally thought he beheld a

building from which the common symbol was absent, a closer scrutiny would discover *something*—a little paper flag with a bit of crape upon it—a black cross in a window—a strip of fluttering black muslin. A poor woman in Delancey Street, too poor to buy the mourning goods she desired, used her best black shawl, and a sheet from one of her beds, which she fastened into a mourning festoon for windows of the single room she occupied. Another tore the trimmings from her bonnet to make rosettes. A rag-picker, in overhauling a heap of rubbish, drew forth a linen rag with his fork. He brushed it clean with his fingers, put his hand in his pocket, and produced a piece of black cambric that he had found elsewhere, and pinning the two in a rude rosette, fastened them to his ragged coat front, with every evidence of satisfaction. Incidents like these speak volumes; and these were incidents which came under my own observation. The poor realized that the dead President was

one of themselves—had once been as poor as they. The streets were thronged with a crowd such as was never before beheld in an American city—extraordinary both on account of its numbers, and on account of the all-prevailing badges of mourning, of every conceivable variety and design. Many were content with the plain band of crape upon the arm or hat; others wore black and white rosettes; others medals with bits of crape, portraits of Lincoln, strings of white satin with inscriptions printed on them. The trade that sprang up in these articles, and others of a like nature, was a thing unparalleled. Five hours had not passed after the reception of the news of the assassination when this trade sprang up; hundreds of men and boys hawked the mournful emblems about the streets, on the ferry-boats, in the hotels. No less universal were the mourning symbols which hung the streets themselves in black. In some instances, whole fronts of buildings were hidden, literally covered

with vast palls of black from cornice to basement, doors and windows obliterated. Temporary white monuments were erected in hundreds, in every part of the town, bearing various legends, frequent among which was this, peculiarly appropriate to the character of the dead :—

Besides, this Lincoln
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking off.

Like other assassins, Booth imbrued his hands in human blood in vain. The course of contemporaneous history marched on, contemptuously ignoring him. Peace spread her white wings abroad over the land; the rebellion was crushed; and slavery was dead for ever on American soil.

VI.

ALEXANDER II. OF RUSSIA.

ALEXANDER II. OF RUSSIA.

I.

MORE than one-sixth of the entire dry land of this earth is ruled over by one man—the Czar of Russia. He is Chief General, Chief Legislator, Chief Judge, and Chief Priest. The Russians call him “Father.” To the Russian peasant there is but one greater Power—the Power which rules in heaven.

Alexander II., son of Nicholas I., came to this lofty estate in 1855. With him came in an era of reform. He abolished serfdom in Russia, as Abraham Lincoln emancipated the slave population of America; and had he done no other good act throughout his life, this one deed should give his name to posterity as that of

a lover of his kind. The supreme autocrat over one-sixth of the inhabited earth, with armies and prisons at his sole command, with generals and judges of his sole and undisputed creation, is not a man to be measured by the rules we apply to ourselves. It is idle to question the whole fabric of mundane existence. Instead of asking why, in the Providence of a beneficent Ruler, there should be such things as Czars, it is the act of sane and trustworthy minds to give credit to the man in whose hands rest such mighty capacities for good and evil, and thank him for setting free millions of people whom he had the power to continue in slavery. This was the first good work of Alexander II.'s reign, but it was not all. He abolished the knout; he threw open the courts; he instituted a new and more worthy legal system; he reorganized the system of taxation on a juster basis. Not by what he failed to do, but by what he did, should Alexander II. be judged. Endowed with all but irrespon-

sible power, he so reigned that Russia made rapid progress during his generation.

No such monarch could exist without drawing upon himself individual hatreds, which, combined, create a dreadful and dangerous mass of animosity. Punishment for crime in Russia leaves the criminal alive; only for high treason is capital punishment inflicted. Law-breakers even of the deadliest class are sent to hard labour—on the public works, in the galleys, or the mines of Siberia. Escapes thence are not infrequent. The refugee becomes the deadly enemy of the Czar. All the capitals of the world feel the presence of these men; they live for vengeance. It does not follow that they are animated by a love of free institutions. They need not even be Nihilists, though willing to applaud their schemes of destruction. Many of them are Poles, consumed with a burning thirst for some measure of redress for their personal wrongs. The events which led to the death of Polish independence, how-

ever sad for Poland itself, were sadder still for Russia. They were no doubt the indirect cause of the Czar's becoming weary in well-doing. The march of reform in Russia was interrupted thereby; the Czar ceased to battle against active evils in his empire, and rested on his arms.

II.

Alexander II. was no doubt the gentlest-hearted ruler Russia has ever known. His temperament was gloomy; those who met him for the first time were struck with the extreme sadness of his demeanour. He felt profoundly the responsibilities of his position; and in his later years he felt its danger to his life. He professed to believe in Destiny, but it was the destiny of doom. To relieve his gloom, he sought to surround himself with cheerful companions. The tie which knit him so closely to the Princess Dolgorouki was woven of the sunny cheerfulness of her nature, which

made him less unhappy in her society. He strove to keep his mind diverted by all the means at command of limitless wealth. He loved the noise and animation of the public thoroughfares, the glitter and gaiety of theatres, the pomp and display of military pageants. His favourite windows in the Winter Palace looked out on the busiest street in St. Petersburg, the Nevski Prospect, and it was one of his chief pleasures to survey this scene. In fine weather he was fond of sauntering about the town, looking in at the shop-windows, followed by his favourite dog. Meeting acquaintances, he would nod in friendly fashion, but unless he thus sought recognition no one addressed him.

The attempts upon the life of this Czar since the suppression of the Polish insurrection have been numerous. One of the most celebrated is that of April 16th, 1866, when an ex-student in St. Petersburg fired at him, with no effect, at the gate of the Summer Garden—where a light has

ever since constantly burned before an image of the Virgin, surmounted by the inscription, " Touch not mine anointed." In the following year, on June 6th, he was again fired at without effect, by a Pole, while out driving with Louis Napoleon in Paris. Again in April, on the 15th, in 1879, he was fired at, but escaped unhurt. On December 4th of the same year a mine was laid on the railway by which the Czar passed to St. Petersburg, but again he was unharmed. Last year there were two notorious attacks: in February, when the dining-room of the Winter Palace was blown up and nine soldiers killed, and in September when again the railway leading to St. Petersburg was mined.

So many narrow escapes began to foster among the superstitious peasantry a belief in his charmed life. But these were probably but a small proportion of the attempts which were really made to assassinate the Czar. He suffered from asthma, and a box of pills professing to be a remedy therefore

was sent him ; on examination, the pill-box was found to contain an explosive contrivance sufficient to have killed several persons. A petition was sent him covered with a noxious powder, which would have poisoned him but for the precautions taken. Danger lurked in the food he ate, the wine he drank, the bed he slept on, the clothes he wore. His life became one uninterrupted vigil. Did he venture to walk out, behind him walked a Cossack hetman and two detectives with loaded pistols, their hands on their arms. Did he drive, a number of carriages surrounded or followed the Czar's, and in which one he sat no observer could guess. Did he travel by railway, there was a grand palace-car for Alexander II., but he was not in it ; he sat in a disguised van having the appearance of a baggage car. Did he venture to dine, even in the privacy of his own apartments, guards stood at the doors ; guards even kept watch over the cook ; and when the food was ready it was conveyed to the

royal table by two officers, who tasted it in the Czar's presence before he would venture to eat. The wine was not only uncorked in his presence, but the officers drank of it before him. As for smoking, that was abandoned, though the Czar was fond of a good cigar; what subtle poison might reach him through this means could only be imagined. When the hour for repose drew nigh, none knew in what room of his palace Alexander would elect to go to bed, or whether he would sleep in the palace at all; and when he did go, not only was his favourite dog—a huge mastiff—set to watch him, but the Cossack Yusuf, his trusted hetman, also watched, and soldiers were stationed in every possible part of the palace by which the imperial chamber might be approached. By day he wore, for a time, a coat of mail beneath his vest; but it proved so irksome that he could not endure it, and in lieu of it his tunic was padded with a knife-proof preparation of cotton wool.

All these precautions became at last unbearable. Life was not worth living at such a price. The Czar grew haggard and nervous; he saw in every bush a murderer; and not long ago he gave orders that this system of excessive surveillance should cease.

“I will go and come as I please,” said he. “I will eat and drink what I please; do as I please. I shall be murdered in the end; it is my destiny. I have already lived longer than any of my race, and I fear not death.”

The precautions which surrounded him were accordingly relaxed. To Count Loris Melikoff the duty of standing between his sovereign and death was delegated, and the Czar was left as free as was consistent with common prudence.

III.

On the morning of Sunday, March 13th, 1881, the Princess Dolgorouki received an anonymous letter warning her that the

Czar was to be assassinated that day. She begged her imperial consort to stay at home; but Alexander II. was in unusually high spirits, and he would not be coaxed. Count Loris Melikoff had called at the palace early this morning filled with the purpose of keeping the Czar at home, but he found all his efforts wasted.

“I *will* go,” said the Czar, obstinately. “Look at this glorious sun,” exclaimed he. “It is a magnificent day, and I am resolved I will review my troops. The weather is superb. Whatever happens, I will go.”

Count Loris Melikoff was in despair. He induced the Czar’s favourite—his son’s wife, Marie Feodorovna—to add her entreaties; but nothing would shake Alexander’s determination to go out. Not daring to adopt the expedient once employed by Louis Napoleon’s chief of police, and place the Emperor under arrest, Count Loris Melikoff retired. Alexander II. went out to his doom.

The review had passed off brilliantly under the radiant sky, in whose lustrous

sun the military pageantry shone with its best bravery of gold and glowing colours. Music had filled the clear air with inspiration, and all that the Czar loved most in this earthly pageantry had feasted his eyes and ears. Fatigued, but in high spirits still, he had left the parade ground of the Michel Manège and entered his carriage, an ordinary glass-fronted brougham with one seat, drawn by two horses. He was accustomed to drive from the Manège to the Winter Palace along the Nevsky Prospect, but to-day he took the road alongside the Catherine canal, to throw the suspected assassins off their guard, the coachman being uninformed of this intention till the last moment. The horses set out at a rapid gallop; while an escort of mounted Cossacks galloped on either side of the carriage, a sledge with the Prefect of Police rapidly led the way, and the Grand Duke Michael followed. It was a quarter past two in the afternoon; the swiftly moving group, in whose centre rode the Czar, had

reached a point near the stable bridge which spans the canal, and under the garden wall of the Michael Palace; at this instant a man in a peasant's dress, who stood by the side of the canal, threw a bomb at the Czar, which fell behind his carriage, and exploding, killed and wounded several soldiers and bystanders. The back of the carriage was torn out, and hung in broken pieces over the imperial head; but the Czar was unhurt. He stepped from the carriage and was moving towards a wounded soldier; two minutes had elapsed, when another man, who stood in an archway of the palace garden wall, threw a second bomb, which fell at the feet of Alexander II. and tore him to pieces. A column of snow and fragments of wood and glass rose in the air; the windows in the imperial stables across the canal broke with a loud ringing crash; the ground about the imperial carriage was strewn with the bodies of some twenty killed or wounded men. The man who threw the

first bomb was struggling in the arms of the police, a pistol in his right hand and a dagger in his left. The thrower of the second bomb fell mortally wounded, destroyed by his own too-deadly weapon.

The Czar lay on the snow, which was now dyed red with blood. The lower part of his body was shattered in the most horrible manner; his left eye was forced from its socket, and his clothing was in rags.

He raised his bloody hand feebly to his forehead as they lifted him up, and murmured, "Holodno, holodno!" (Cold, cold). Then, as the Grand Duke Michael, with an exclamation of sympathy, seized a cap from a bystander and placed it on the Czar's head, the dying man murmured, brokenly, "To the palace; die there." He was placed upon a sledge, with his bloody head resting on the breast of the chief of police, and driven rapidly to the Winter Palace. Here, at about four o'clock, Alexander II. ceased to exist.

IV.

“The King is dead! Long live the King!” Alexander III., the new Czar, drove from the Winter Palace to his own palace a few minutes later, with his wife, Marie Feodorovna, by his side, through a vast crowd of people, who cheered loudly as the low sledge sped swiftly over the snow, surrounded by its galloping outriders and followed by a plumed troop. Young, strong, majestic in appearance, of great physical stature, and in his thirty-seventh year, he took promptly upon his broad shoulders the burden of the life thus suddenly ended. Assassination had slain the Czar; but here was the Czar!

Such work is as idle as it is terrible.

Twenty-four hours had not elapsed since the death of Alexander II. when the imperial manifesto of the new Czar gave utterance to that undying and haughty

spirit which will outlive a thousand assassinations, and perish only with the death of the faith on which it rests : “ We ascend the throne which we inherit from our forefathers, the throne of the Russian Empire, the Czardom of Poland, and the Grand Dukedom of Finland, inseparately connected with it. We assume the heavy burden which God has imposed upon us, with firm reliance upon His Almighty help. May He bless our work to the welfare of our beloved fatherland, and may He guide our strength for the happiness of all our faithful subjects ! In repeating before Almighty God the sacred vow made by our father, to devote, according to the testament of our forefathers, the whole of our life to care for the welfare, power, and honour of Russia, we call upon all our faithful subjects to unite before the altar of the Almighty their prayer with ours, and command them to swear fidelity to us and to our successor, his Imperial Highness the Hereditary Grand Duke Nicolai Alexandrovitch.”

In the Nicolai saloon of the Winter Palace an impressive scene took place, when Alexander III. met a large concourse of generals and public officers, and addressed them with a strong emotion which almost prevented speech. He called on them to cherish the memory of his dead father, to be faithful to himself, and to believe that he would endeavour to merit the love of the whole of Russia *as his father had done.*

Meantime, the honours paid to the mortal remains of that father were almost unparalleled in their magnificence, in the extraordinary number of sovereign princes, heirs apparent of European thrones, and grand dukes, who participated in the ceremonies at St. Petersburg, and in the widespread sympathy and mourning of the governments and people of the civilized world. In no land was this sympathy more general and sincere, more strongly expressed, than in the United States of America. Secretary Blaine, the American

Prime Minister, was the first to telegraph that expression across the ocean; and it was quickly followed by the voice of the entire American Press, and the solemnly pronounced denunciation of the American Senate upon the assassins. Various State Legislatures also spoke, that of the Empire State eulogizing the murdered Czar as the friend of America during the Civil War, the liberator of Bulgaria, and the emancipator of the Russian serfs, and likening his death to that of President Abraham Lincoln. A requiem mass was celebrated in the Greek chapel in New York, at which all the foreign consuls were present. Similar services were held in London, Paris, Constantinople, and other capitals throughout Europe. In the British House of Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote mentioned that throughout the European family no member had felt the thrill of horror more deeply and more keenly than had England; and in moving the vote of sympathy, Mr. Gladstone eulogized the greatness of the

Czar. Lord Beaconsfield, in the House of Lords, declared him the most beneficent prince that ever filled the throne of Russia.

In Russia, there can be no doubt that the grief of the people was profound and sincere; they mourned for Alexander II. as few monarchs have ever been mourned. The place where he fell was at once railed round and decorated with flowers, and a shrine set up and guarded, preparatory to the erection of a memorial church. The body was embalmed, dressed in the uniform of the Preoprajensky regiment, and removed to the fortress of Saints Peter and Paul, where it lay in state. The ceremony of removal from the Winter Palace was conducted with the utmost splendour and impressiveness. As the glittering cavalcade moved for two hours over the Nicholas Bridge, under a shining sun, it formed a kaleidoscopic scene of gleaming gold and jewels, brilliant hues and luxurious pageantry. The funeral car was of ebony and silver, and a golden pall lined with

white satin hung over the coffin. A tremendous following of soldiers, nobles, and priests, bearing banners of every conceivable variety of splendour, the dead man's nine crowns, and innumerable foreign decorations, emphasized the presence of the solitary figure who walked alone behind the coffin—Alexander III.

In striking contrast to the boundless freedom of the vast crowds who lined the streets of American towns through which passed the catafalque of Abraham Lincoln, were the severely repressive measures it was deemed important to adopt in St. Petersburg. That the world might not be shocked by some new, stupendous, unimaginable horror of the assassin, the funeral procession of Alexander II. took its way through unfrequented streets. In those streets all dwellers were warned to keep their double windows closed; no spectators must be seen on balconies; shopkeepers were not allowed to let their houses to strangers desirous of witnessing

the pageant. Through thoroughfares with closed shutters and no sign of life in the houses, the dead Czar passed. Troops thickly guarded the way, bodies of police kept additional guard behind the troops, and the countless thousands who haunted the line of march endeavoured in vain to see or to draw near. Had any evil demonstration of the enemies of order been made, the offenders would have been—arrested by the police. In New York city, at Lincoln's obsequies, had such a demonstration been attempted (the opportunity for such attempt being absolutely free and unguarded), the offenders would have been—torn to pieces by the people.

V.

The belief that the assassination of the Czar was inspired by Nihilism was assisted by the conduct and utterances of its leading men and organs. In Vienna and Paris, in New York and Chicago, the same

voice spoke in the same essential terms. Whether it was the voice of the special agglomeration of human particles supposed to be covered by the term Nihilism, or merely that of the small fraction of humanity which in every community gladly hears the echo of anarchy, the result is the same; the enemy which wrought the death of the Czar was the chronic disturber of the peace, who, in the name of liberty, violates the laws of liberty. Proclamations were strewn about the streets of St. Petersburg beginning, "The work is accomplished." Meetings of Socialists were held in Chicago and New York, at which the murder was commended by German speakers; the loudest and wildest utterances of this sort were made by the class called in the United States "beer-jerkers." In Paris a small green placard was posted in the night, saying:—"The revolutionary Socialists of Paris congratulate and encourage the Nihilists of Russia, who, by their energetic action, have shown the disinherited of the

two hemispheres how to rid the earth of a tyrant." In Vienna a Nihilist proclamation saw the light, purporting to have been printed in Russia, which declared :—" The sentence of the Executive Committee, dated August 26, 1879, has to-day, March 13, 1881, been carried out by two members of the committee. The tyrant has been executed. The names of the courageous executors of the will of the committee we do not publish, as we do not think it requisite. The determined and persistent work of two years has now been crowned with success. . . . In addressing ourselves to Alexander III. we must remind him that historical justice exists for him as well as for others."

The ordinary sane mind is amazed at these utterances, which unite the ferocity of the tiger to the simplicity of the child. One does not wonder at a child's ignorance, but when such ignorance links itself to ideas of progress and reform, the consequences are startling. The notion that with the death of one man—even an auto-

crat—a government dies, is worthy of the believer in a perfect rule on earth which scorns the government of law.

The Government of Russia, such as it is, is an hereditary institution, a species of property, belonging to the Romanoffs; and their right to it under existing conditions is really no more disputable by blousards, communards, and German-American “beer-jerkers” than any other rich man’s right to his possessions and his advantages over his fellow-men. Opinion may dispute that right, as opinion disputes many other things it cannot change, or can only change through the lapse of æons. To back one’s opinion by crime is to array one’s feebleness against the others’ might. The death by murder of Czar after Czar would leave the sovereignty still in the same hands. Full twenty heads would need to fall before the assassins could even consider that they had made a breach in this iron wall; and then—what? The Nihilists themselves do not know what they would

give Russia in lieu of its present Government. Not a republic, certainly. A republic has never been talked of; they are not republicans, these men—they are simply wreckers.

The principles of Nihilism as printed and extensively circulated throughout Russia, based on the utterances of Michael Bakunin, declare that the old world must be destroyed and a new one take its place. “The lie,” this manifesto proceeds to say, “must be stamped out and give way to truth. It is our mission to destroy the lie, and to effect this we must begin at the very commencement. Now the beginning of all those lies which have ground down this poor world in slavery is God. Tear out of your hearts the belief in the existence of God, for as long as an atom of that silly superstition remains in your minds you will never know what freedom is. . . . The first lie is God, the second lie is right. Might invented the fiction of right in order to insure and strengthen her reign. Might, my friends,

forms the sole groundwork of society. Might makes and unmakes laws, and that might should be in the hands of the majority. . . . And when you have freed your minds from the fear of a God and from that childish respect for the fiction of right, then all the remaining chains which bind you, and which are called science, civilization, property, marriage, morality, and justice, will snap asunder like threads. Let your own happiness be your only law. But in order to get this law recognized, and to bring about the proper relations which should exist between the majority and minority of mankind, you must destroy everything which exists in the shape of State or social organizations. Our first work must be destruction and annihilation of everything as it now exists."

Such principles as these hardly deserve confutation; they are for fools and madmen, and they lead to every possible crime. But they are uttered by many men, in the capitals of both the old world and the new,

who approve of assassination, and rejoice in its latest tragedy. In the New World they are not Americans, but men of European birth, chiefly Germans, vaguely assimilating with the true spirit of republicanism. From the true democratic spirit, law and order have nothing to fear. That spirit is indeed to-day the guiding one of English-speaking peoples, on both sides of the sea. It means, not wreck nor overturning, but the hesitating and tentative movements of prudence and safety, on which all reforms have slowly but surely progressed, and by which movements alone they can progress, without evils so grave as to nullify the good.

VI.

The trial of those who were arrested after the assassination followed speedily. They were six: Risakoff, the young man who threw the first bomb, and who was arrested on the spot; Sophie Perofsky, the daughter of a Senator much respected in St. Peters-

burg ; Hussy Helfman, a woman said to be of the courtesan class ; Michaeloff, a discontented workman ; Kibaltchick, a chemist with a personal grievance ; and Jeliaboff, a pale and argumentative anarchist, who confessed himself arch-conspirator, and seemed to wish to save his companions from death. Risakoff's counsel sought to palliate the bomb-thrower's crime on the score of his extreme youth, pointing out that he was a mere lad of nineteen, hitherto of good character. Sophie Perofsky gloried in her crime, proclaimed her Socialistic views, and asked no mercy. Michaeloff declared that his conduct was caused by a desire to improve the condition of the working classes. Kibaltchick assumed the manner of a learned professor, and gave voice to certain views of a philosophical character regarding the exaggerated estimate commonly placed on human life. Jeliaboff had much to say, and said it with force and eloquence, but it related chiefly to the political views of the revolutionary party, of which he

claimed to be an instrument, and involved no plea for his own life. All six conspirators were promptly condemned to death, and all were as promptly hanged, with the exception of the woman Helfman, who was found to be with child, and whose execution was therefore deferred.

THE END.

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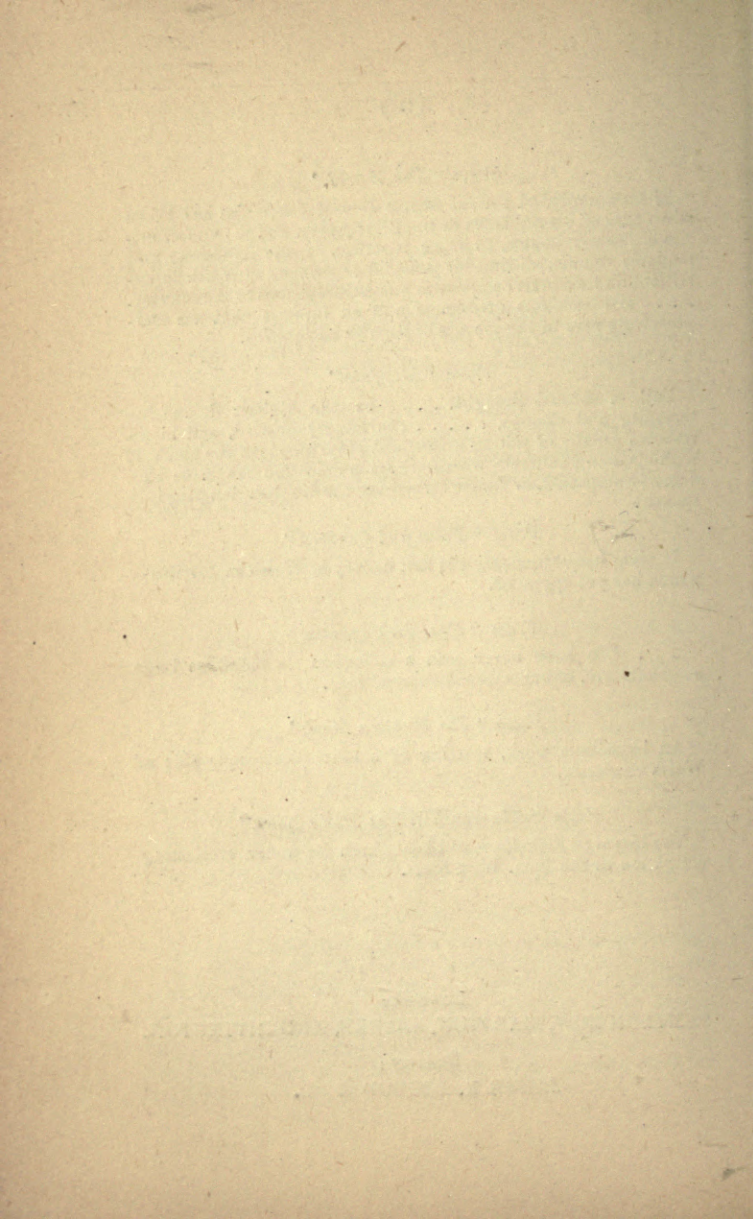
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